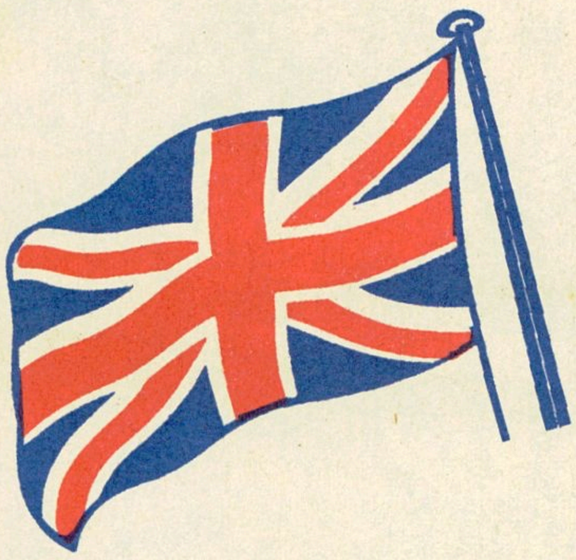
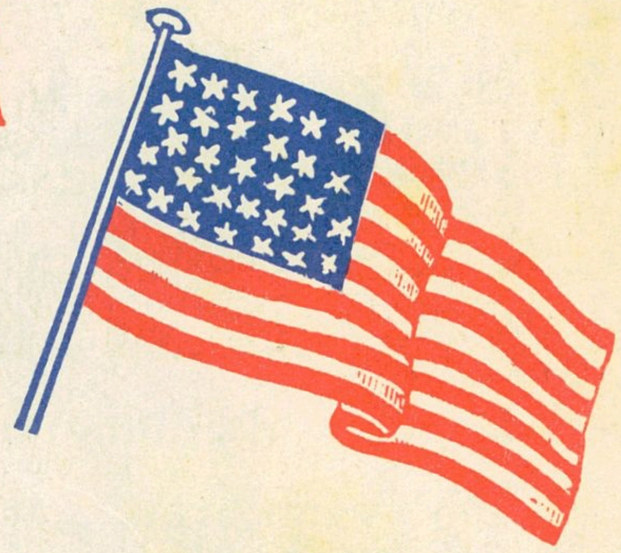
o. 869
riday
April '95

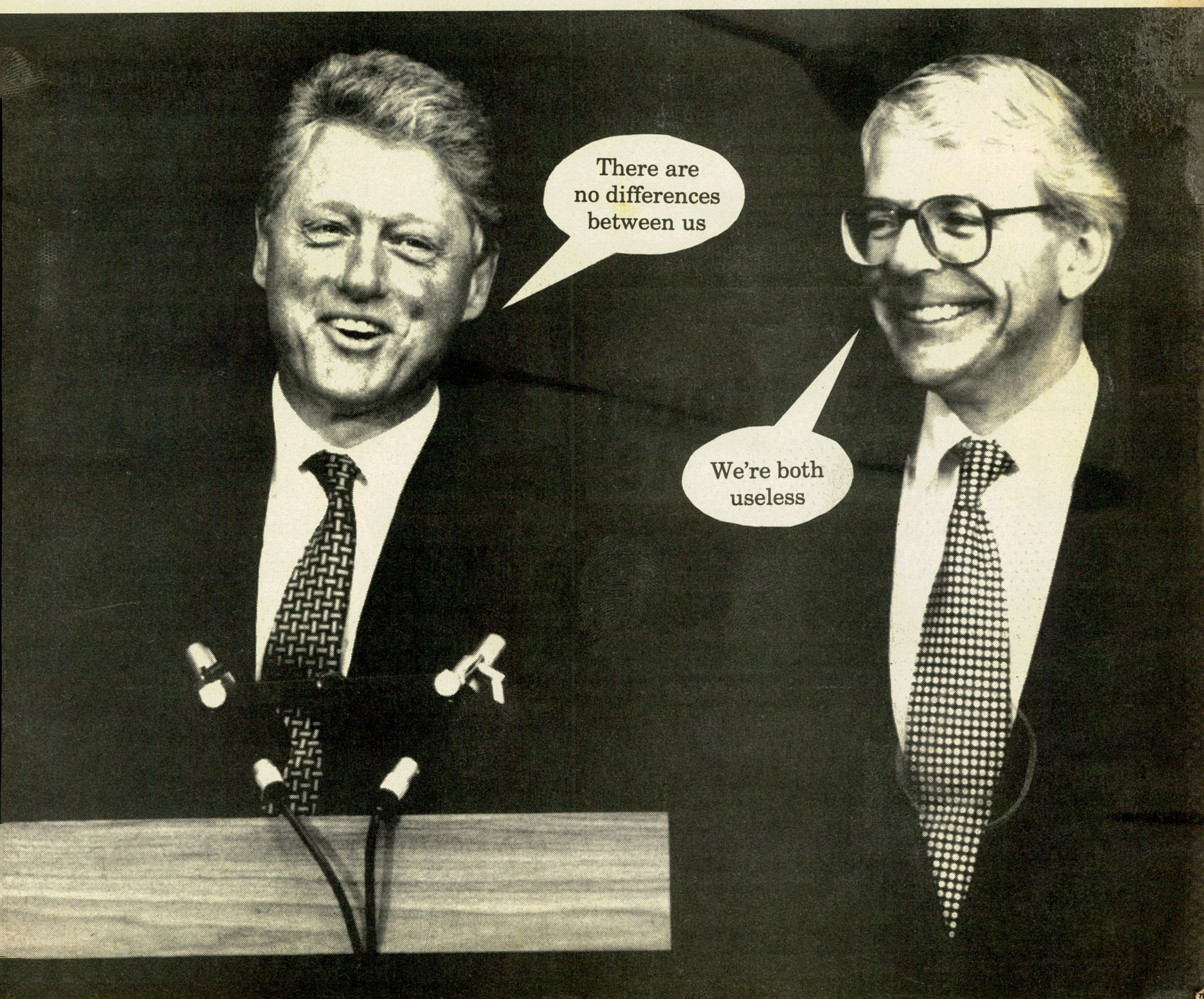
PRIVATE EYE

£1

TOGETHER AGAIN

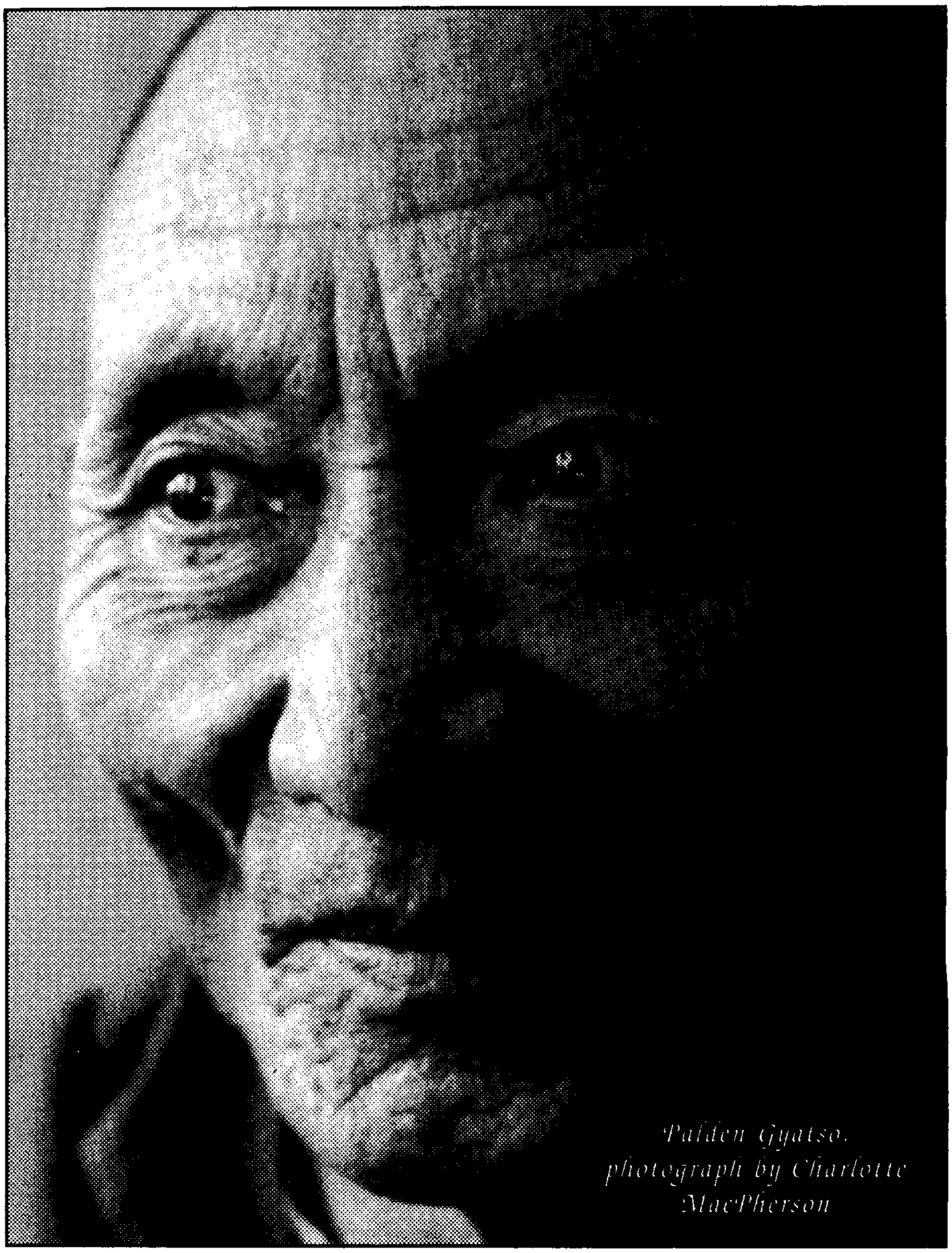






Years of torture could not kill his spirit.

But we could.

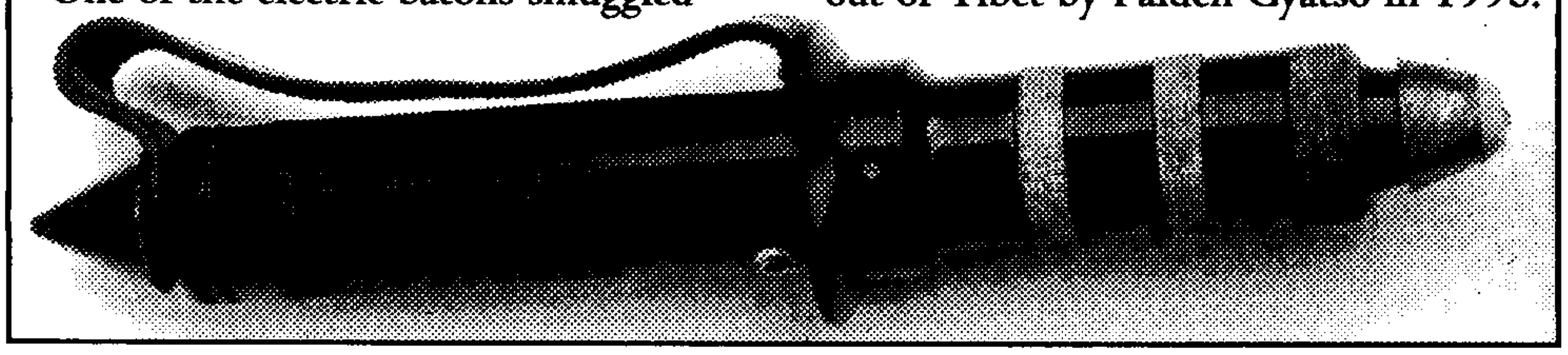


Palden Gyatso, a Tibetan monk, spent 30 years in Chinese prisons for daring to call for his country's freedom. During those years he was handcuffed, kicked, beaten with chains and a stick studded with nails, hung from the ceiling by his arms, starved until hunger drove him to eat his own boots, sent to a labour camp, forced to sign a false confession, given high voltage shocks, had an electric baton shoved down his throat and woke up lying in a pool of urine and vomit to find he had lost twenty of his teeth.

For 30 years, Palden's captors could not break his spirit. But we in the West may succeed where they failed. When he escaped, Palden smuggled out some of the knives, electric batons, handcuffs and thumbcuffs with which he'd been tortured. He desperately wanted the world to know what is happening in Tibet - illegally and brutally occupied by China since 1950. But he found that few Western politicans give a damn.

Palden Gyatso is in Britain to talk about his life - please contact us for details. But most of all, please honour Palden and those who are still suffering, by joining us and helping us keep up the pressure on China to free them and their tortured country.

One of the electric batons smuggled out of Tibet by Palden Gyatso in 1993.



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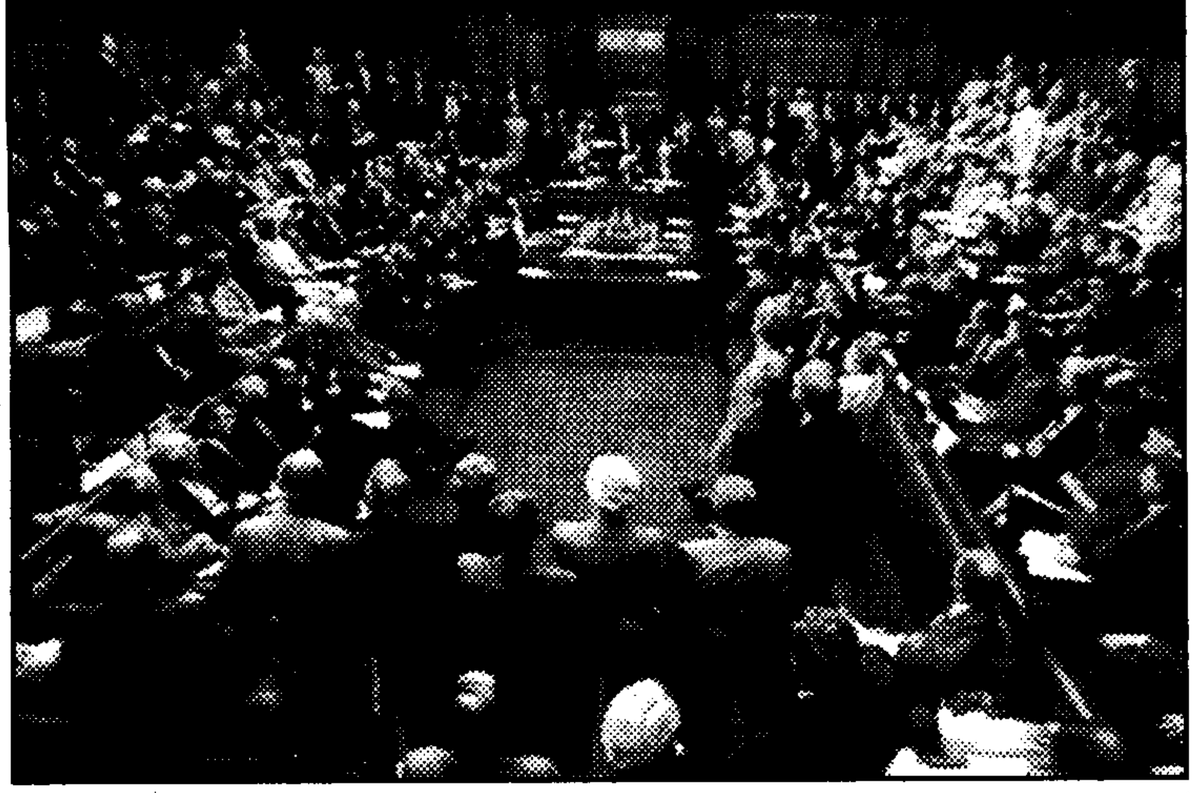

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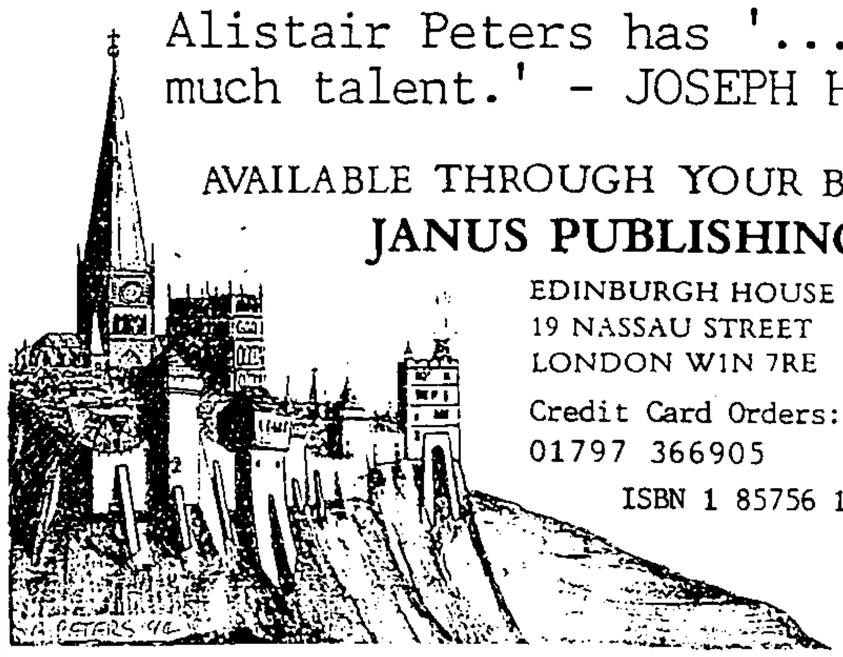

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ALISTAIR PETERS

GRRREAT EXPECTATIONS

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Just roll it
round your tongue.

W. & J.
GRAHAM'S
PORT

Gnome

HOW RIGHT the Prince of Wales is to say that we are a nation of cynics who constantly run ourselves down and belittle our finest institutions!

I have recently come across exactly this small-mindedness myself on the subject of one of our great traditions — the National Lottery.

The extraordinary success of this unique competition, which unites the whole nation on a Saturday night in a selfless spirit of giving, should have commanded nothing but admiration.

But what has been the reaction?

The charities whinge that their income has been drastically reduced.

The churches whinge about the damaging effects on people of winning £20 million.

The politicians whinge about the choice of projects that the Lottery chooses to fund.

And so it goes on. The moaning Minnies and the cynical Sidneys venting their sad, pessimistic creed of dismay.

Well thank goodness for the positive approach that some of us in this country still feel able to take and the pride that some of us are still able to display.

I say hats off to Gnomelot plc, the organisers of the National Lottery, for creating an event that gives us all such a huge amount of money *(shurely 'fun'? E.S.)*.

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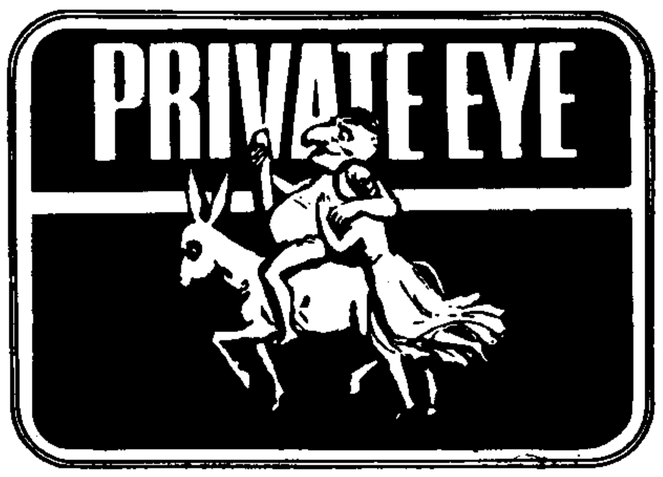


COLOUR SECTION

Candour Corner

NO ONE can understand the story of Jonathan Aitken and the illegal trading of his former arms company without careful study of the following sequence of events.

28 October 1994: A television company, Box Productions, writes to Jonathan Aitken to ask: "What information did you have about one of BMARC's largest contracts, known as Project Lisi?"

BMARC was a British arms company of which Aitken was a director from September 1988 to June 1990. Project Lisi was its single largest export contract: the selling of naval guns to Singapore.

28 November: Aitken replies: "I had no knowledge of Project Lisi."

14 December: Box writes again to Aitken asking more questions about Project Lisi.

23 December: Aitken replies: "To make the position absolutely clear, I had no knowledge whatsoever about Project Lisi."

29 March 1995:

MORNING: The *Independent* leads its front page with a headline: AITKEN FIRM BROKE ARMS RULES. The story (along the lines of the piece in the *Eye* two years ago: see below) alleged that the guns BMARC supplied to Singapore in Project Lisi were sold on to Iran. At the time the British government observed a strict embargo on the export of "lethal equipment" to Iran.

Aitken's response was immediate. He issued a statement to lobby hacks. "Seven years after the event, I have no recollection of Project Lisi or read about it in company reports." This was already considerably less emphatic about Lisi than his letters in November and December.

MIDDAY: On BBC Radio's *World at One*, Gerald James, former chairman of BMARC's parent company, said it was common knowledge among all the directors including Aitken that the guns were going to Iran.

EVENING: Aitken issues another statement: "Mr James has got his facts wrong. First he claims that I knew that the Lisi contract involved the export of arms to Iran. I did not know that. Second he claims that the Lisi contract was discussed at board meetings that I attended. This is not my recollection."

Already the denial was shifted from "I did not know about Lisi" to "I did not know Lisi arms were going to Iran".

30 March: The *Independent* front page produces NEW EVIDENCE ON AITKEN ARMS LINK. The story quotes BMARC board papers from two meetings which reported that Aitken was present. Project Lisi and the guns contract for Singapore are both mentioned in the papers, and the board minutes reveal a) that the papers were discussed in detail; and b) that Aitken was present at both meetings and spoke at the first one. Of the first meeting, Aitken said: "I left early." On the second meeting, he refused to comment.

That afternoon, in the House of Commons, Aitken made a statement:

"At no board meeting of the company and in no board paper of the company was I ever given the slightest indication or information that could suggest that the company's wholly legitimate contract to Singapore might subsequently result in components being shipped to Iran."

The U-turn was complete. There was now no denial of knowledge of Project Lisi — only a denial that he knew the guns were bound for Iran.

(Readers of *Eye* 859 are referred to Fiction Masterclass, Learn the Aitken Way, which notes Mr Aitken's consistent and time-honoured economy with the truth: over TV-am; over his trip to the Paris Ritz and over a meeting with business associate Mr Ayas on his yacht Katamarino.)

Three Spooks and a Crook

AITKEN's astonishing ignorance about the eventual destination of the guns exported to Singapore is backed up by four former fellow directors of BMARC. These are:

- Major General Donald Isles, OBE, deputy lieutenant of Lincolnshire, with close connections to *intelligence*.
- Stephan Kock, a former Midland Bank defence consultant, with close connections to *intelligence*.
- Bill McNaught, who liaised closely with *intelligence* over the touchy question of the supergun.
- Chris Gumbley, who was sent to prison for nine months for corrupting a ministry of defence official.

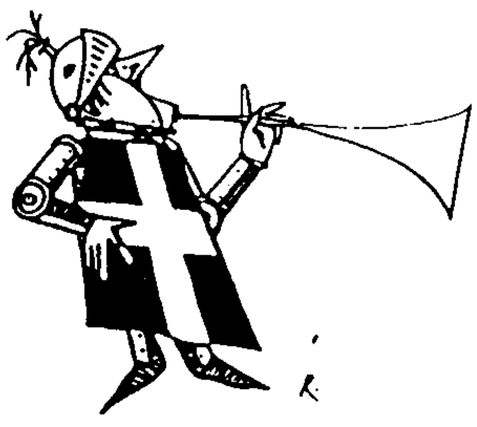
Balls-Aitken Press

THE *Times* and London *Evening Standard* decided to defend Aitken by attacking the journalist chiefly responsible for the *Independent* story: Tim Laxton.

Andrew Pierce of the *Times* (31 March) wrote on the front page that Laxton "audited the Astra Holdings and BMARC accounts while working for the London firm Stoy Hayward. Mr Laxton left Stoy Hayward after the Department of Trade and Industry criticised its preparation of the Astra accounts between 1986 and 1989." The *Times* — and the *Evening Standard* in a leading article that evening — insinuated that Laxton was guilty of a "conflict of interest".

As so often, the facts are the exact opposite of what appeared in the *Times*. Tim Laxton was indeed an accountant who worked for Stoy Hayward from 1985 to 1990. While there, he never audited the accounts of BMARC or Astra or any other company. He left Stoy Hayward two and half years *before* the DTI criticised it. He resigned in protest at the way in which Stoy Hayward had handled the Astra account, and provided a lot of information to the DTI inspectors.

In October 1993 Laxton sent a long list of detailed complaints to the Institute of Chartered Accountants, none of which has yet been dealt with. Laxton has been a working journalist for nearly two years; was a regular attender of the Scott inquiry and is a co-author of the *Eye*'s special inquiry, *Not The Scott Report*.



Eye told you so...

No one is better placed to do this job than Aitken, who keeps up his long and loving relationship with the kings and princes of Saudi Arabia. Aitken is also a former director of a now bust arms company called BMARC, which sold arms (via Jordan, Singapore and other places) to Iran and Iraq while the then British government pretended it had imposed an arms embargo on both countries.

Private Eye 823, 2 July '93

Street of Shame

NOW the dust has settled the *Eye* can reveal how the "story" of Mary Ellen Synon's affair with Bank of England deputy governor Rupert Pennant-Rea made it into print.

It is already known that Ms Synon had approached the *Spectator* and *Grauniad*, both of which declined to break her tale. What has not been reported, however, is the curious role of the *Daily Mail* and its editor Paul Dacre. For Ms Synon also approached the *Mail* — and she certainly wasn't sent away with a flea in her ear.

Instead the rag sent a team of hacks to interview her and extract all the moist detail. When it came to publishing the scoop, however, the paper suddenly got cold feet.

Whether the Associated Newspapers chairman Sir David English became involved is unclear, but a decision was taken that the *Daily Mail* itself should not be seen to break the story. A call was therefore made to Tessa Hilton, editor of the *Sunday Mirror* and a former editor of "Femail" in the *Daily Mail*, and she was handed the story on a plate. The *Sunday Mirror* duly went ahead and published the story — and the next day the *Mail* ran its interview over a couple of pages without being guilty of having broken the story.

Editor Paul Dacre is known to be a morally fastidious fellow. A few years ago when the *Mail* paid Pamella Bordes for her kiss and tell story, Ms Bordes was billeted for several days at Dacre's north London home. After she left Dacre (one of Sir David English's loyal lieutenants) disposed of the bed in which she had slept and charged a new one to the bountiful Lord Rothermere.

PONTIFICATING on the resignation of the Bank of England's Rupert Pennant-Rea, oily *News of the Screws* editor Piers Morgan told Radio 4's *Today* programme the personal lives of Fleet Street editors were of no interest to the public.

This had nothing to do with the fact that the two men who run the *Screws*, and who every Sunday denounce the shenanigans of others, have troubled private lives themselves.

Morgan recently left his wife and small child (official reason: "over-work"), while his deputy hatchet-man Phil "Philandering" Hall has just dumped his long-time live-in girlfriend, lovely *Today* associate editor Tina Weaver, for... the blonde next door.

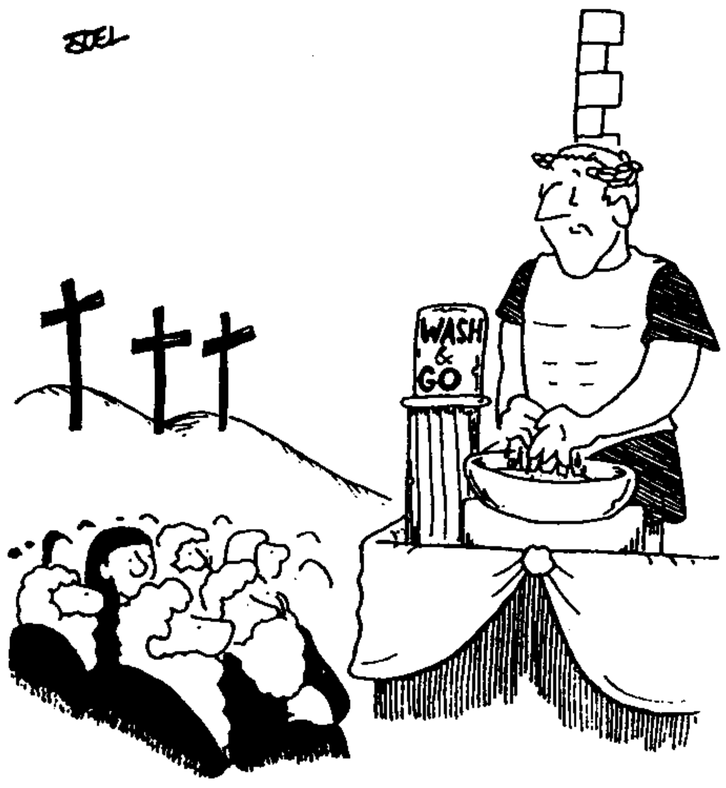
CEDRIC'S £13,000 RUGBY BLOW OUT screamed the *Daily Mirror* headline, revealing how the fat cat chief executive of British Gas hosted a lavish do at the England-Scotland rugby international.

British Gas paid £650 a head for 20 guests in a VIP box at Twickenham, fulminated the "socialist" newspaper's business editor, Clinton Manning, reprinting the entire lunch menu from Fillet of Scotch Beef with Dunsyre Blue Fondue Sauce to "fine wines, port and brandy".

How did the people's organ secure such detail? Easy. Manning had his own nose in the trough at the VIP box nextdoor — that of the National Westminster bank — which presumably couldn't afford fine wine or brandy as it recklessly loaned too many zillions to Robert Maxwell.

Still, it is good to see the socialist *Mirror* fighting for Britain's hungry army of downtrodden part-time workers. With the help of the TUC, it has launched a freephone "legal advice" line for them.

PS: Having sacked all its own National Union of Journalists office-holders and banned NUJ general-secretary John Foster from even entering *Mirror* premises, the phone line is *not* open to the hypocritical rag's own army of new short contract staff.



A GLIMMER of hope is sustaining gloomy hacks at the *Indie*. Thanks to the unexpected resignation of *Sindie* editor Ian Jack there is some prospect they may be spared the cutting edge of Monty the Knife, believed to be a reference to the drastic editorial plans of David Montgomery, chief executive of their major shareholder, Mirror Group Newspapers.

Until Jack's resignation, Monty's gang believed that the two *Independent* editors were wet lefties who hadn't a clue how to run a newspaper the proper Wapping way and could therefore be dispensed with when necessary. Jack's surprise resignation — caused partly by an offer of the editorship of *Granta*, and partly out of despair at the prospect of years of negotiating with Montgomery et al — shook the whole company to its foundations. Montgomery's new partner as leading shareholder, Tony O'Reilly, of Irish Independent Newspapers, warned that unless the editorial gloom was lifted there would be no newspapers with which to make money.

In a panic the management called off its secret hate campaign against the editor of the daily *Indie*, Ian Hargreaves, whom they wanted to replace with Andrew Neill. Hargreaves was flown to Dublin where O'Reilly assured him he had the full confidence of the management.

HOW much longer can Andrew Neill serve two such competitive masters as Rupert Murdoch and Viscount Rothermere?

Neill writes weekly columns in both the *Sunset Times* and *Daily Mail*, and last week he used his *Mail* column to defend Murdoch, the innocent victim, he said, of a disgraceful attack in the *Guardian*, which claimed there was a crisis at Wapping.

According to Neill there was no named source for the piece, which said Murdoch had flown in to sort out the mess. "Now what kind of journalistic standards allow the *Guardian* to fill almost a page with a story based on rumours, never mind unconfirmed ones — especially from a newspaper that loves to sneer at other papers when they base their stories on such flimsy sourcing?"

The inspiration for the *Guardian* piece was in fact Christopher Leake, a Rothermere minion whose story had appeared in the previous week's *Mail on Sunday*. The *Guardian* merely followed up the *Mail*'s gloating coverage, which also referred to a "crisis", as well as a "problem," "damage," "misjudgment," and "a furious Mr Murdoch."

Given the increasing conflict between Murdoch's satellite and Rothermere's cable interests, "The Voice of Controversy" will have to choose which publisher to be controversial about... before the choice is made for him.

THE *Daily Express* drew on its huge scientific expertise when it covered the nerve gas disaster on the Japanese subway.

On page four an astute hack told readers that because the gas, Sarin, "is slightly heavier than air, it hovers close to the ground to cause maximum fatalities".

Eager readers, keen for more *Express*-style insight on the Japanese catastrophe, could turn to page five. There they were told "Sarin is lighter than air, and would normally disperse quickly in the open air, the enclosed, overheated space of a subway or tunnel would be the perfect site for a massacre."

Private I-I-I!

THIS ISSUE'S rundown of the nation's most self-obsessed columnists, based on the number of incidences of the word "I" per column-inch).

		Ego Rating
1	Mary Ellen Synon (Observer2/4)	3.12
2	Zöe Heller (Sunday Times 2/4)	2.76
3	Barbara Toner (Mail on Sunday 2/4)	2.67
4	Barry Hines (Observer 2/4)	2.05
5	Michael Winner (Sunday Times 2/4)	1.81
6	Justine Picardie (IoS 26/3)	1.68
7	John Diamond (Times 1/4)	1.55
8	Matthew Parris (Times 27/3)	1.35
9	Mary Ellen Synon (E. Standard 22/3)	1.31
10	Miles Kington (IoS 24/3)	1.29

Bubblin' under: Harry Enfield, Anne Robinson, Jack Tinker, Bernard Levin.

ME & MY OLIVE OIL

This issue's top reviewer is Simon Hopkinson (Independent 25/3).

Mentions of self: 17

Mentions of olive oils tasted: 1

AS reported in the last *Eye*, *Mail on Sunday* editor Jonathan Holborow paid £300,000, sight unseen, for the rights to a book on Mark Thatcher.

Having read this "work" by Paul "Oyston" Halloran, Holborow promptly sent an *MoS* hack to Dallas with instructions to dig up something new.

Perhaps the information will be provided *gratis* by the *Daily Mirror*, which set up a "secret" team to prepare a spoiler for the *Mail on Sunday*'s serialization. So top secret was the team, lead by ageing *Mirror* hacks Ted Oliver and Harry Arnold, it was removed from the editorial floor. Alas, *Mirror* news editor Martin Clarke soon quit and returned to the employ of Associated Newspapers, presumably taking any gleanings on Mark with him.

Even so the effort of both the *Mail* and the *Mirror* may have been too late. A team of hacks from the *Sunset Times* has also been in Dallas, and its scoop about upaid tax and health insurance at Mark's burglar alarm company, Emergency Networks Ltd, was published in gory detail in the *ST* on 2 April.

What a shame it would be if the *Mail on Sunday*'s £300,000 went up the spout buying dramatic "revelations" which were no longer dramatic or revealing.

THE *Observer*'s new editor, Andrew "Son of Neill" Jaspan, continues to fly home to Edinburgh at weekends — at the impoverished *Guardian*'s expense — while looking for a home in London.

He did succeed in endearing himself to his staff, however, by lecturing them on the need to win more awards. No one dared point out that the paper netted more than a dozen last year, including the *What The Papers Say*, Newspaper of the Year award which hangs outside the editor's office.

SNOBBISH hack Tim Satchell, who has failed as a diarist on almost every paper in Fleet Street, launches a new magazine this month dubbed *Son of Hello*.

Imaginatively named **The Insider**, Tim's new gossip column is by-lined (even more imaginatively) *Grovel*. The rag is expected to achieve standard Tim Satchell shelf-life — about one issue.

ON A freebie to Tokyo recently the London *Evening Standard*'s pisspoor Peter McKay, the world's worst columnist, was taken out on the town by the paper's local stringer, Jonathan Annels.

In the early hours and after gallons of *saki* the two round-eyes mistakenly entered a brothel. Due to an linguistic misconception, the Japanese girls misunderstood the special needs of the drunken hacks. "Out!" screamed the tiny madam. "My girls not sleep with drunken white men!" Then pointing at tubby McHacky, she added unkindly: "Especially that one!"

HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! *WE ARE honoured to join our old friend the Marquesa Olga Polizzi at the opening of the Hotel Eden in Rome.*

As well as Olga's parents, Lord and Lady Forte, a throng of has-beens — Sir Charles and Lady Powell, Lord McAlpine, Frank Johnson — are in attendance to pay court at the regal arrival of Baroness Thatcher.

There is one deeply embarrassing moment, however, when la Thatcher is left with just a glass in her hand and no one to talk to. Unconcerned she turns grandly to the room at large. "We find the look and the scent of these flowers is wonderful," she announces, pointing to a colourful festooned curtain.

The Marquesa trusts the faculties of La Barona, 70 this year, are in no way diminishing.

HALLO! TO CARDIFF Arms Park with the Princess of Wales to see Wales trounced by Ireland. Cleverly, Diana steps off the train clutching a rugby magazine and instantly wins the hearts and minds of all those oafish leek eaters.

On the train back to civilization, however, her dashing eldest boy William and his school chum begin fighting over a more exciting periodical which contains an erotic photograph of scantily-clad blonde bimbos, the Barbi twins.

Diana immediately rips this disgusting pornography in two... and hands each boy half each!

HALLO! TALKING of endangered species, wasn't it moving to hear the Prince of Wales, opening last week's symposium on Britain's role in the world, commend our "on the whole good race relations"?

The Marquesa has witnessed Charles's own sensitivity in this area. Visiting the Kent public school Sevenoaks to open a sports centre, HRH graciously engaged one of the younger pupils with his famed small talk: "So, you've been ski-ing recently?"

"Er, no," replied the embarrassed 13-year-old. "I'm always this colour."

HALLO! *OUR talented friend Sir Tim Bell bravely shoulders yet another important task: helping the Norwegian government in its efforts to reinstate commercial whaling and kill more whales.*

In 1985 the International Whaling Commission made the Minke whale a protected stock, but the Norwegians continue to harpoon 300 a year. "We represent the Norwegian embassy in London, regarding their fisheries management — not solely whaling," sniffs a flunky from Lowe Bell Communications.

"It's an emotive issue. Some environmental groups do not recognise the Blue whale is not the same thing as the Hump-back or the Killer... which is not the same as the Minke."

HALLO! DIZZY social "fixer" Liz Brewer is hosting a wild beano at snobby Mayfair nick-knack shop Thomas Goode this Wednesday, so that all her chums can view a BBC documentary about her called *The Fame Game*.

Liz has laid in pints of champers and 39lbs of caviar. Alas la Brewer (best friend: Mona Bowens; best client: Ivana Trump) is so giddy she has not yet twigged that the 50-minute TV profile is a complete piss-take that makes her look like a moron.

HALLO! HANDSOME Dick "Big Bucks" Giordano, non-executive chairman of British Gas, has, it seems, cleverly manoeuvred the hideous Cedric Brown into taking all the flak as Mr Privatised Greed.

The dimwits at British Gas were so desperate to employ the cigar-chomping American, who only earns half a million from his other directorships, that he was able to negotiate their initial offer of £150,000 up to a meagre £450,000.

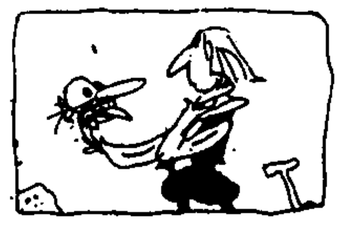
Aware that alongside plans for mass sackings this left him "exposed", "Big Bucks" had a simple solution: "over-expose" the lackey beneath him!

The immensely talented — and modest! — Giordano thus wins a double benefit: soon he will be able to hire someone far more able than bungling, red-faced Cedric, who is so witless he cannot see his boss's game. Cedric's pay-off will be even more obscene than his salary — but worth every penny to Tricky Dicky.

HALLO! *ST PATRICK'S Day passes, and we share the joy of Sir Patrick Mayhew QC, secretary of state for Northern Ireland, as his eldest son secures a place as a pupil in barrister's chambers in the Temple.*

In the ferocious battle to secure pupillage (many embryonic barristers are left by the wayside), young Jerome Mayhew has beaten stiff opposition to be selected by 1, Temple Gardens for a place this October. By inexplicable coincidence, Jerome's jovial papa practised from these very premises some 20 years ago. Just fancy that!

LUVVIES



"No, I've never been in love. I've been obsessed, but I've never told anyone I love them. At the most I've said I love you too or *Je t'aime bien*. I've given up hope. You know, I really believe that Asian thing that the camera steals your soul. When you are playing a love scene you are so into your part and you say 'I leurve you' and you do love them.

"But that's one of your times gone, and the next time you say it, you feel the last time was maybe more real. You feel like you are acting all the time. It's spooky."

RUPERT EVERETT
The Times

Submitted by F. Harvey.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

HALLO! SPRING is in the air and the Marquesa's thoughts turn to summer holidays — to be spent this year with the delightful Angela Rumbold MP and her husband John.

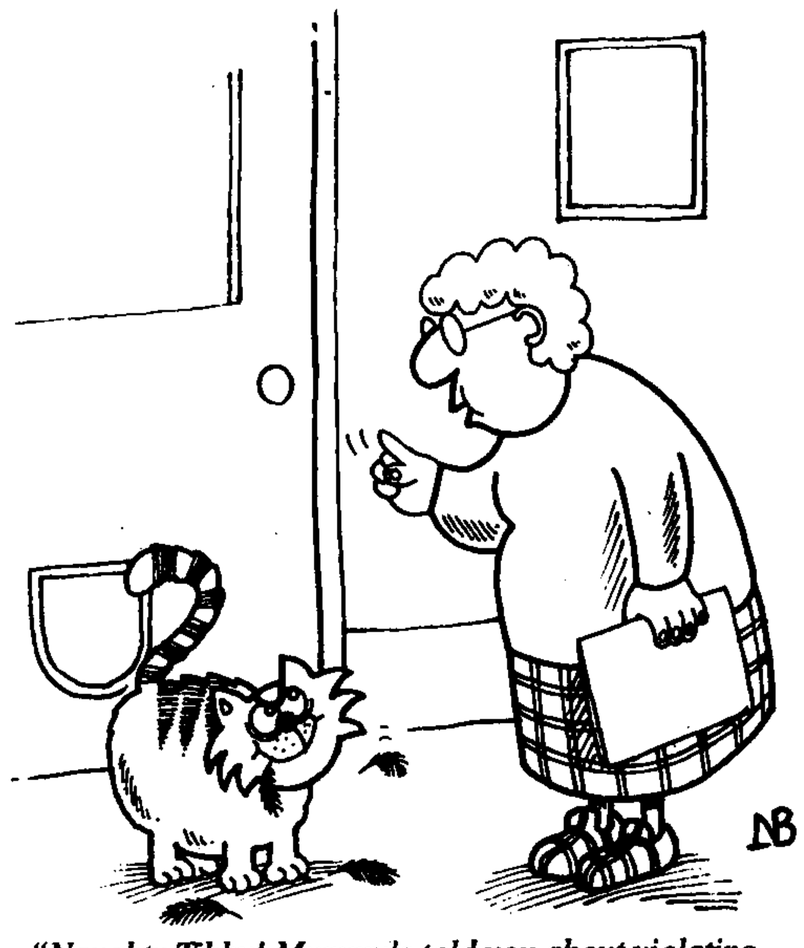
Last year was a hoot as we went on an upmarket bucket and spade holiday at one of Barbados's *most* expensive hotels, part of the five-star beachside Decision Maker chain.

How Dame Angela can afford it on an MP's salary beats me, but at the end of the holiday we boarded the plane — the Rumbolds in first class, *natch* — in good spirits.

Dame Angela nodded off, exhausted by her strenuous holiday-making, while John experimented with the hospitality wine. Eventually his enjoyment overcame him and he spilt his drink down his trousers. The cabin crew took the damp flannels away to dry them, which gave Angela a bit of a shock when she woke up and saw him sitting there with no trousers on.

When she asked where her husband's trousers were the mischievous hostesses pretended not to know. The semi-nude John was left wriggling in his seat until the crew relented on landing and returned them to their sheepish owner. Our snaps look wonderful of course!

'The Marquesa'



"Naughty Tibby! Mummy's told you about violating the rights of other animals!"

LOONY TOONS

THE lunch between Tony Blair and Paul "Loonybins" Johnson — predicted in *Eye* 866 — must have been a good one, although Johnson's Damascene conversion from Thatcherism to Blairism was in many ways pathetically predictable.

It was Loonybins who wrote during the 1968 Paris riots, when editing the *New Statesmen*, that he had seen "the very gates of Heaven". And it was the same puce-faced, red-headed loon who drivelled 20 years later over Thatch: "If she has a fault, she is too tender-hearted."

In recent years Johnson has specialised in doom-mongering Why-oh-Why? diatribes in the *Daily Mail*, but signs that Ernest Saunders-style symptoms were setting in became apparent on 6 November 1993 when Johnson announced (in the Mail, under the headline *"Yes, life really does get better as time goes by"*) that he was now an OAP.

Senility, however, made little difference to Johnson, and only eight months after beginning one of his usual diatribes *"Why is Britain an unhappy country today?"* (23 April 1994), he was blaring: *"Let's tell the world who's best"* (23 December 1994). From there it was a small step to the humiliating embrace of Bambi.

As for the previous object of his desire, Lady Thatcher, Johnson is scurrilously putting it about that she is "getting out of hand" thanks to an exaggerated fondness for liquor. No doubt the old fool is worried that she might turn into a sad, red-faced former right-winger who drinks too much... and whom no one takes seriously any more.

PENSIONERS all over the west Midlands were victims of "over-ambitious and inherently risky" sharp sales practices by the West Bromwich Building Society, according to a secret FIMBRA report leaked to the Commons treasury select committee.

Unwitting oldies were encouraged to mortgage their homes so that West Bromwich could invest the dosh on the stock market. Many now face repossession as both the value of their homes and the stock market have dived.

Old people living in Bromsgrove would be quite correct to think that their MP Roy Thomason has been a little inconspicuous in condemning the cowboy practices of their local building society. But they would be quite, quite wrong to think that this omission was in any way connected with Thomason's employment by West Bromwich as a parliamentary adviser since 1992.

As the Nolan committee as been hearing (*Eyes passim ad infinitum*) there is never *any* conflict between the interests of an MP's constituents and his paid extra-parliamentary activities!

THE rotund Eric Pickles MP is listed in the latest register of members' interests as "parliamentary adviser to Coopers & Lybrand" — a prestigious post with one of Britain's largest and wealthiest accountancy firms.

The Tory MP for Brentwood and Ongar's star seems to be on a rise as he has become vice chairman of the Conservative party and chairman of the National Local Government Advisory Committee in the last few years.

The latter is a post he is well-equipped for after years in local government. As leader of Bradford council between 1988 and 1990 he tried to transform the council into "Bradford plc". Of course to help him in this task he needed some heavyweight help. So the council, under his leadership, paid out a trifling £336,000 to consultants whose task was to accelerate the compulsory competitive tendering process. The consultants? Er, Coopers & Lybrand.

THROUGHOUT the late 1980s John Prescott, furious at being frozen out by Neil Kinnock's modernizing clique, scathingly referred to something he termed the "Warm Words Committee".

Rather pleased with his own phrase-making, Prescott used this expression — often on TV — to denounce the wishy-washy, no-policies PR speak exemplified by the hated Peter Mandelson.

Now of course Prescott has been instrumental in the unceremonious dumping of Clause 4 and replacing it with the blah-blah drawn up by Tony Blair's all-dancing, all-singing "Warm Words Committee."

Other members of Labour's NEC have been equally fearless in support of their new leader. The following all ignored their own constituency general committees, which voted to keep Clause 4, and joined the "Warm Words Committee": Gordon Brown (Dunfermline East); Margaret Beckett (Derby South); Mo Mowlem (Redcar); Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden); Jack Straw (Blackburn); Harriet Harman (Peckham).

JOHN REDWOOD, who promised to cut the number of NHS bureaucrats in Wales only to see their numbers rise, has devised another form of cutback.

When he ordered cuts in staff at the Welsh office (*Eye* 863) he presumably intended to make savings. In fact Redwood has decided not to cut the fat cats at the top, but middle-ranking civil servants in their 50s. They are being given enhanced retirement pensions and are walking away with handsome pay-offs of £80,000 each.

But all is not lost for these loyal servants: the Welsh office has generously decided to take them back on as consultants, thereby creating the illusion that numbers have been cut while paying out a lot more money for their services. Brilliant!

IN a recent press statement transport secretary Brian Mawhinney claimed the UK was a world leader in shipping safety.

A fortnight later, an internal memo leaked to senior staff at the Marine Safety Agency, the UK's ship safety inspectorate, came as a bit of a shock after the minister's reassuring statement. It reveals that Mawhinney is cutting MSA jobs by around 15 percent.

Other workers, meanwhile, are supposed to have their safety protected by the health and safety executive (HSE). Not for long. No fewer than 85 senior factory inspectors and medical advisers have been axed under an early retirement scheme designed to save money. This is despite the fact that the impending rail and gas supply industry privatisations are expected to *increase* demands on HSE staff.

TONY BLAIR cheerfully told his aides after his clause four rewriting meetings: "I have made no concessions to the unions." Not true.

His original draft included this passage: "Labour will work in pursuit of these aims with trade unions, co-operative societies, and other affiliated organisations, and also with voluntary organisations, consumer groups and employers representatives."

Whoops! That really was a bit much, even for the most loyal union leaders. They dug in their heels and even at one stage threatened to denounce publicly the whole document as a return to the values of the national government of the 1930s. Grudgingly, Blair conceded. The words "and employers representatives" were replaced by "and other representative bodies".

"Makes a change – usually we're the ones being bribed"

WHEN eight of the Tories' "whipless nine" read the statement from Mrs Teresa Gorman calling for them to return to the fold before the May elections, they could not believe their ears.

They thought Mrs Gorman had perhaps got the date wrong, believing it to be not 2 April but 1 April. For whenever any of the eight has dared to suggest a return of the whip, they have had to put up with interminable scolding from the rampantly militant Gorman.

Her change of heart is unlikely to stampede the eight, however. As reported in the last *Eye* most are basking in undreamt-of popularity in their constituencies.

Two former Tory agents who made it to the Commons from Norfolk make an interesting contrast. Michael Cartiss, MP for Great Yarmouth, lost the whip and is greeted everywhere in his constituency as a conquering hero. He has high hopes of holding on to at least some of his 5,309 majority.

Next door, at Waveney, David Porter is in great trouble. His majority is higher — 6,702 — but he takes the Tory whip. What remains of the fishing industry in Lowestoft won't forgive him. Those close to Mr Porter have heard him mutter that the only way he can hope to return to parliament at the next election is to resign the whip.

A CONFIDENTIAL list from one of the most fiercely secretive departments in the House of Commons has reached the *Eye*: the innocuous-sounding Commons Refreshment Department's weekly banqueting list, which details how many snouts have been in the trough.

The five Commons dining rooms are arguably the most prestigious in the land, and in the three-week period covered by the list the rooms overflowed with Tory guests. A greedy 84 percent of the functions were hosted by Tory MPs, while Labour MPs accounted for only 13 percent and the Liberals just 3 percent. In total the Tories fed and watered more than 4,700 people at 107 functions in the three-week period.

The Tory who topped the list for the largest function was Barry Field, MP for the Isle of Wight. He hosted a reception for 200 on the Commons terrace. Nigel Forman, Sir Fergus Montgomery and Roger Sims, were three other well-fed Conservative MPs over the period covered by the list: they held three functions each while their colleagues on the other side of the House complain they struggled to book one.

The rooms' historic function is to host members' reunions and receptions for visiting constituents. But Labour MPs insist that fundraising events and business functions are held in the banqueting rooms. The catering select committee responsible for making the rules in this area will never know because MPs who sponsor events do not have to tell them.

IN EXILE on the backbenches, Norman Lamont is passionately anti-European.

Consistent? Well, he won his Kingston-upon-Thames seat in 1972 on an anti-market ticket. But idly flicking through the archives (Eye 277) it emerges that only months later, in July 1972 during that historic vote to join the Common Market, Lamont made his maiden speech... announcing his conversion to the Euro ideal. Definitely ministerial material.

'Backbiter'

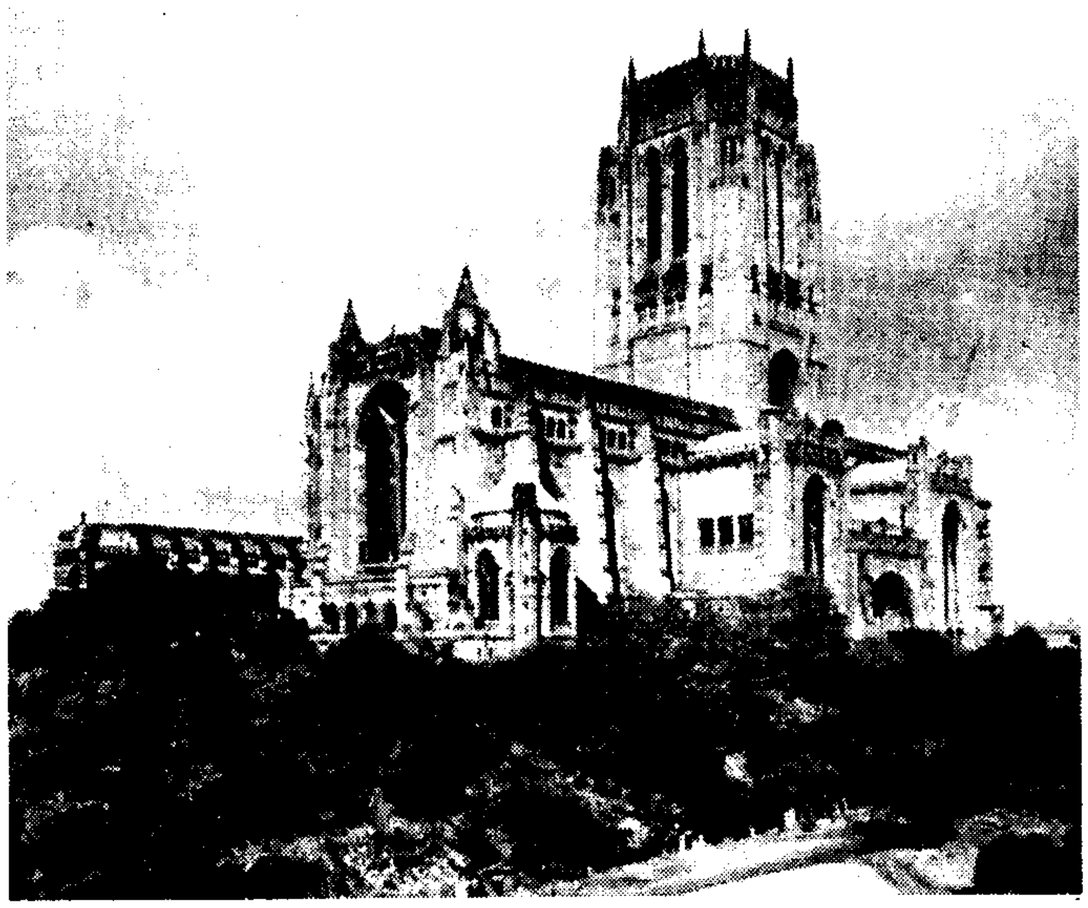
NOOKS and CORNERS

IN THIS day and age it is so important that the Christian message is not seen to be stuffy and out-of-date. This is why the Church of England is keen to play down the more unpleasant aspects of Easter, like the Crucifixion.

It is also shown in its concern to embrace the most popular spiritual pastime of our era, which is shopping. Most ordinary people feel more at home inside a hypermarket than in a gloomy old church, which is why the dynamic dean of Liverpool, the Rev Derreck Walters, wants to install a panoramic glass lift in the north-west transept of his cathedral — just outside its most important facility: the gift shop (or visitor centre) and the tea room (or refectory). This will remind visitors of the sort of exciting glass lifts they are familiar with in the atrium of a department store or shopping centre.

Liverpool cathedral is, of course, one of the finest expressions of the Gothic Revival and the most spectacular cathedral created in the 20th century. Begun in 1902 and only finished in 1980, it was largely designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott — he of Bankside power station and the poor old red telephone box. But Scott, I am afraid, was constrained in his vision and did not think of "vertical access" to the exciting facilities (as yet unplanned) in the currently unused eastern triforium.

Fortunately, the current cathedral architect, Keith Scott (no relation), has seen the answer to this problem and so proposes an "elevator" or "moving 'glass balcony' " which "will open up a wholly new aspect of the grandeur of the building and... will in its own right be a valuable addition to the life and ministry of the church".



If such a lift is really required, it could be installed in the lobby of the north-eastern tower; but this would involve piercing a series of reinforced concrete floors, which would be expensive. But the main disadvantage of this solution is that, "being out of sight, it does not impinge on the internal architecture of the cathedral". And that would not do at all.

Mr Scott, in contrast, and Mr Dean, want an exciting new lightweight structure that everyone will see and want to whizz up in. Besides, ever conscious of the disabled lobby, it can accommodate at least two wheelchairs or one stretcher. Furthermore Mr Scott claims that the lift is reversible and that "this delicate structure could be taken down and few would know it had ever been there" — providing, that is, the big hole in the floor to take the lift into the basement is filled in and a large chunk of the traceried parapet to the triforium gallery is replaced.

Lots of people are in favour of the "elevator", like Professor Tarn of Liverpool university, although the "fabric committee" is divided. Even the Cathedrals Commission and English Heritage do not object, although both should think seriously about the implications of what Mr Dean is determined to do. For Mr Scott insists that, "far from becoming a neo-Gothic mausoleum, all additions to this contemporary building should be 'state of the art' and of our time". That's the spirit! But so what if Liverpool cathedral is "neo-Gothic"? What if it was merely Gothic, like Lincoln cathedral or Salisbury or Wells? Would these gentlemen still install a panoramic glass elevator in the interior? Perhaps they would. This is the go-ahead Church of England preparing for the 21st century, after all.

ANOTHER 20th century architect who usually gets a raw deal is poor old Sir Herbert Baker, who has had a bad press ever since he quarrelled with Lutyens in New Delhi and Robert Byron had a go at him for his enthusiasm for replacing old buildings by, say, Wren with designs of his own.

But Baker was not a bad architect — indeed, he was much, much better than any of our Prince-of-Wales-approved new classicists practising today. So why are Baker's buildings regarded as expendable?

One of Sir Herbert's last works, begun in 1937, was the Royal Commonwealth Society in Northumberland Avenue. This rather dim club has fallen on hard times and its desirably positioned site in central London has been up for grabs. Indeed, it has now been grabbed by Messrs ARIC, a French development company, which proposes for squeeze some 190 apartments between Northumberland Avenue and Craven Street as an "aparthotel". This involves destroying everything behind Baker's Portland stone facade — the really rather fine vaulted and decorated entrance hall as well as dining room, meeting rooms and library.

The developer's architect is the Renton Howard Wood Levine Partnership, which faces a problem. Baker's decent and subtle facade, enriched with sculpture by Sir Charles Wheeler, has arched windows on the ground floor and tall windows and a balcony as a piano nobile, with three floors of small windows above. RHWL proposes to fit six floors behind this, so floors will have to run across windows, while the piano nobile will be mutilated by cutting out the upper architrave and the frieze above. Would ARIC-RHWL treat a facade by, say, Adam in so cavalier and barbaric a manner? Perhaps they would. We are approaching the millennium, after all.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

Pop is a very effective parallel-communications system, transmitting messages about the present and future which represent a serious breach of etiquette within the vision of a chocolate box. Fifties theme park Britain that cloaks the social Darwinism unleashed by unchecked market forces.

JON SAVAGE
Introduction to Faber Book of Pop

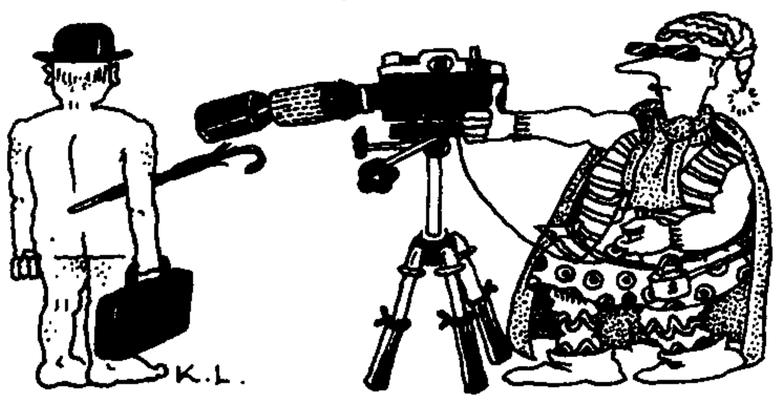
For 10 rounds McClellan wrung out of his destiny every last drop that it would concede. Wrung it dry. Even in his failure there was greatness. The rest of us languish, content to let destiny pass us by, to happen to other people. Now McClellan is on a life-support machine. For most of us life is little more than a life support machine.

GEOFF DYER
Guardian

The aim is to address the spatial formation of social identities in specific contexts, exploring the production and transgression of cultural boundaries and the contestation of public and private domains. *Consumption and Space* will treat consumers as active, knowing subjects without exaggerating their power or romanticizing their agency. Such a conception of everyday life demands a plural and diverse reading of spatiality, including a sensitivity to the gendered, sexual and ethnic constitution of the sites of consumption.

Reflecting the "cultural turn" in the human sciences, we aim to attract contributors working across the disciplines, especially from media and cultural studies, social and cultural history, and economic, social and historical geography. Authors will be encouraged to argue a critical case, but to write in an accessible style to address a broad readership.

Announcement
University College London Press



"I describe myself as a penis photographer," announced Tabitha, a 26-year-old photographic student in oblong shades and numerous layers of clothing. "I'm here because I'm trying to combat patriarchy. I want post-patriarchy in 1995. I am aiming to put the burden of representation back on the male nude because it has been on the female for so long."

Sunday Times

The best work in the show (by Kiki Smith) is Peacock (1994). A crouching female nude made from papier mache gazes at a loose cluster of prints fixed to the gallery wall. The prints are blue vaginas. A papier mache thread hangs from each, and two of these threads trail all the way to the figure's eye sockets. It's a remarkable image of sexual awakening. She is both master and slave of her own sex, which flies before her like a kite.

JAMES HALL

Guardian

Backstage pass

What's in your rider? Condoms, Kit-Kats and orange juice.

Which multinationals would you love to be sponsored by, and which would you refuse? a) Mercedes-Benz. b) The ones who are not paying enough money.

If your parents showed up to see you perform on their anniversary, what song would you do for them? Sex In A Jeep.

What gifts would you encourage people to shower you with? Money, diamonds and cars.

What do microphones smell like after you've been using them for a while? Hot sex.

Do you take requests? It depends on how big it is.

You see a couple making love in the front row. How do you react? Depending on how the couple looks, it could become a trio.

RAJA-NEE
Guardian

CONTRIBUTORS: Lord Gnome, D. O'Brien, R. Maitland, R. Nykolszyn, P. Barnes, K. Heddle.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Charlotte Bronte Unmasked

(BBC2)

SOMETIMES the shenanigans surrounding the making of a television programme offer such strong entertainment value one can't help wondering why the producer didn't just dump the main feature and get on with making a behind-the-scenes documentary instead.

Such was the case with BBC2's film about Charlotte Brontë which, after two troubled years in gestation, finally reached the screen last Saturday evening. At times the whole production threatened to topple over into low farce.

At the height of the controversy over the film, a bootleg copy of taped telephone conversations in which the producer, Daisy Goodwin, made unflattering remarks about the chairman of the Brontë Society and other members of the **Bookmark** team was doing the rounds at Television Centre, provoking much outraged amusement. In one riotous set piece, shortly before Christmas, a posse of Brontë Society council members marched on Wood Lane, declaring that they might only represent a small provincial literary society but this didn't mean they weren't prepared to take on the mighty corporation — in court if necessary — if their anxieties about the film weren't resolved.

Daisy Goodwin has a patchy track record at the BBC where her high-handed ways and grand manner have won her few allies. For a time she depended on the patronage of Nigel Williams while he was editor of *Bookmark*. Goodwin, as she never tires of telling people, was the model for the character of Maisie Goodwill — described as the proud possessor of "the biggest jacksie in SW19" in Williams' 1993 novel, *East of Wimbledon*.

By the time Williams moved to *Omnibus*, Goodwin had cleverly shored up her position by telling the *Guardian* that her new boss, Kim Evans, was the best thing ever to happen to BBC music and arts. At present, as executive producer of *Bookworm*, the BBC's last ditch attempt at a populist books programme, Goodwin is riding high. Poll findings may tell Alan Yentob that book lovers are dissatisfied with it, but the fact that the programme has retained a reasonable share of the *Antiques Roadshow* Sunday teatime audience makes it, in the controller's eyes at least, a success.

The idea for a film about Charlotte Brontë, with Goodwin at the helm, was originally suggested to *Bookmark* editor Roland Keating by fey, thirtysomething biographer Mark Bostridge. Keating took some persuasion, but eventually gave the project the green light. Naturally the chummy old school tie helped him reach a decision. He, Bostridge and Goodwin were all at Westminster School in the 70s and form part of the so-called "Wetminster Mafia" in BBC Arts.

Faber novelist Charlotte Cory was employed as presenter. Before long, however, the film had left in its wake a trail of bruised egos and hurt feelings. Goodwin, who likes to think of herself as an *auteur*, resented Bostridge's position as the main Brontë authority on the film and went to extraordinary lengths to exclude him.

As for Cory, the year-long experience of working with Goodwin was, as she told the *Sunday Times*, "so extraordinary and vile it defies belief." Half way through filming, without consulting anyone, Goodwin decided the film was not going to be about Charlotte Brontë but would instead be called "Brontë Business", concentrating on what she saw as the exploitation by the Brontë Society of the Brontë heritage. Cory was to be the *agent provocateur* in confrontations with the society staged for the cameras. When Cory protested that this was not the programme for which she had been contracted, Goodwin resorted first to bullying tactics and then, when Cory demanded that she return to the original synopsis, marginalised her completely. Finally, when the society got wind of Goodwin's plans, she was forced to revert to the original idea.

A film, initially budgeted at a modest £60,000 had by now soared to almost twice that figure (a situation not improved by Goodwin's decision to cut short expensive filming days at Haworth in order to join her close friend, the Huddersfield poet Simon Armitage, on the fast train back to London).

The finished programme was received with consternation by BBC executives. The research was out-dated (the hoary old myth about Charlotte destroying the sequel to *Wuthering Heights* was resurrected and passed off as a dazzling new discovery); there wasn't one memorable shot in the entire 50 minutes and the whole film wobbled around unconvincingly, unable to find a focus. When one reads Goodwin telling *Time Out* that the Brontë cult is "like another James Dean scenario", it's tempting to conclude that she was in over her head from the outset.

'Booknark'

"And don't you feel you've rather dropped us in it, Mr Chamberlain, by declaring war on Germany?"

MEDIA NEWS

WITH a large slice of the funds raised by Comic Relief destined to aid less fortunate Britons, the Teletext subtitler lumbered with the task of transcribing Ben Elton's "Red Nose Night" routine should soon be in for a windfall.

Working live, and obviously with no prior knowledge of the content, the unknown Ceefaxer struggled valiantly to bring the Ranting One's high velocity tirade of filth to the nation's hard-of-hearing.

A typically tasteful monologue about the hairless vaginas of *Baywatch* — or *Wankwatch* as Elton renamed it satirically — was thus rendered inadvertently amusing. Deaf viewers could delight in such bizarre phonetic spellings as "fan nis" for "fannies"; numerous variants of "pubic" (puebiaec, etc); and Elton's cheery observation that some of the women's vaginas were so bald he quite expected to see "coJack" lollipops protruding from their gussets.

Especially amusing were the whole passages left out by the subtitler, though whether due to exhaustion or simple distaste we do not know. Certainly the subtitler cannot have been that familiar with Elton's *oeuvre*. His trademark closing line was rendered: "My name's bellElton. Goodnight."

DEREK JAMESON and his wife Ellen recently made several hyped appearances on *Noel's House Party*, one of which was a long and not very funny Gotcha piece.

A hidden camera recorded Derek and Ellen's reactions to set-up blunders on his Radio 2 show *The Jamesons*. Since Sid Yobbo is no longer the man of the moment — and since Ellen never was — why is Noel Edmonds giving them so much airtime?

Could it have anything to do with the relaunch of *The Jamesons* in Scotland as an independent production? The production company chosen for the job being Unique Broadcasting — whose director just happens to be Noel Edmonds.

BBC executives from around the country met up at the corporation's plush training centre in rural Evesham for a recent two-day "management conference".

The punishing schedule inevitably took its toll, and the managers needed to relax. The training centre had just the thing: the dining room was sectioned off and the managers played a mini-golf tournament.

Simon Channon, an executive at the conference, said: "We didn't buy it, you know, they already had it. A nice 15ft-long course with a pond in the middle and plastic air balls."

ESTHER'S ANTI-BULLYING HELPLINE
ARE YOU BEING BULLIED BECAUSE YOU'RE INADEQUATE? ...
Kleenex
HOPELESS, WEAK, UNPOPULAR, AND INCOMPETENT? ...
THEN DON'T DESPAIR ...
YOU CAN JUST BLAME IT ON JOHN HUMPHRYS
"Prime Minister - What's your favourite colour?"
TODAY
Ken Pyne

I-BSkyB

The hide and shriek ending was workmanlike but the tale broke as much new ground as a Save Clause 4 rally. For *real* chiller TV see the new X-FILES series Tuesdays on Sky One.

Review of ITV's Chiller by
GARRY BUSHELL
The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: F. Harvey

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

EGG on face: the report in Media News detailing the BBC animal police's clampdown was wrong in one tiny respect.

The programme in question was *Our Man In*, not *A Postcard From*, and the presenter in question was not Clive James but Clive Andersen. An easy mistake to make (*No. You're fired. Ed.*)

LIBEL NEWS

PANIC must be starting to grip the absurd *Sunday Times* as the irrepressible Michael Foot, alias Agent Boot, marches closer to the libel witness stand.

The case hangs on the ridiculous story told by Oleg Gordievsky and its confirmation of this tale by former KGB Colonel Victor Kubeykin. *Sunset Times* hack David Leppard flew to Moscow where he claimed he got that confirmation from Kubeykin. But (see *Eyes passim*) the Russian colonel's version of the meeting is rather different.

It is here the *ST* legal team faces a problem: the interview between Leppard and Kubeykin was recorded. But the section where Kubeykin confirms Foot as a Russian agent is mysteriously missing.

Meanwhile the paper's proprietor has obviously smelt the foul whiff of failure. Rupert Murdoch is soon to go to court himself to try to have his name removed from the libel writ. Any former editor knows that there is no way Murdoch can claim the ignorance of the hands-off proprietor; but the legal argument promises to be interesting if old Murdoch editors like Simon Jenkins and Harold Evans creep out of the woodwork to reveal the extent of the Digger's proprietorial interference.

Until then Murdoch's name remains loyally, if unwillingly, stuck beside those of his employees.

WORLD OF FREEBIES

THE glamorous picture in the last *Eye* of the Rt Hon David Mellor QC MP and his mistress courting the emir of Bahrain has caused dismay among supporters of the Bahraini opposition, many of whose leaders (and 2,000 of whose supporters) are in jail or in exile for demanding a democratic constitution and the right to vote.

Among these is former Liberal MP Lord Avebury, chairman of the parliamentary human rights group. He wrote to Mellor asking if during his highly-publicised (and highly subsidised) trip to Bahrain the former foreign office minister had met any member of the Bahraini democratic opposition. Mellor replied: "I don't think it appropriate to become involved in your disputes with the government of Bahrain."

Mellor is not the only MP to have been welcomed in Bahrain recently by the emir. A parliamentary delegation led by Mr William Powell, Tory MP for Corby, went there for a few happy days in March. The delegation got a petition from some of the dissidents but did not manage to see them. The day after the petition was delivered, one of its signatories, Abdul Wahab Hussain, was arrested.

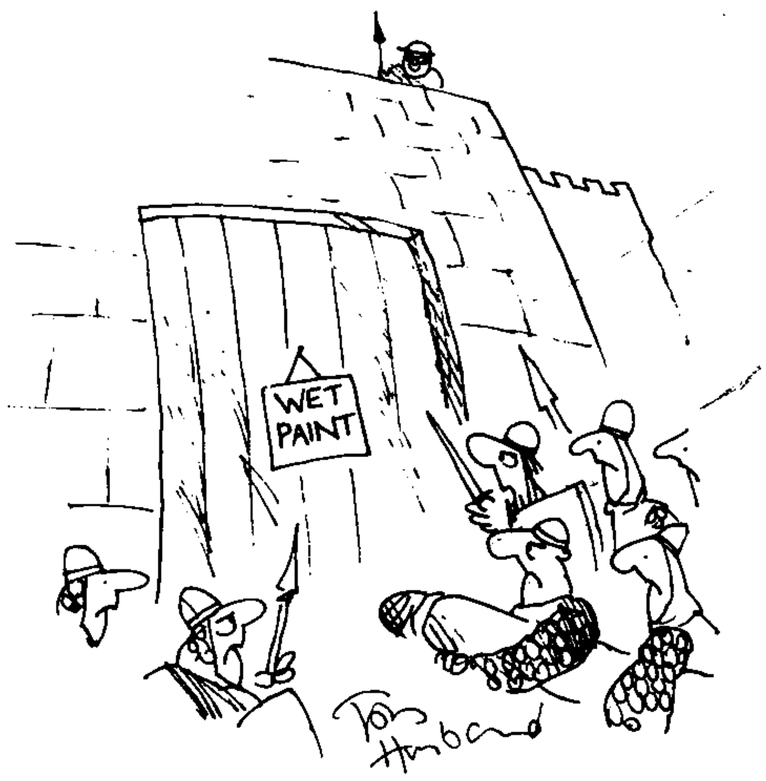
On his return Mr Powell wrote an angry letter to the *Financial Times* protesting at an article (16 March) entitled MILITANTS JOLT COMPLACENT BAHRAINI RULERS. Powell declared that "Bahrain is a long-standing and traditional friend to Britain" and concluded: "The emir, the prime minister and his government deserve our encouragement, support and confidence."

Eye readers will recall Mr Powell as the lucky recipient of substantial regular payments of £500 a month from the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, a London pressure group for the Gulf sheikhs. None of these payments was directly declared in the register of members' interests, and no one at the select committee or anywhere else in the Commons showed the slightest interest.

Mr Powell goes back to Bahrain in May — to the Sheraton Hotel to introduce a "half-day seminar" organised by the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, followed by a sumptuous dinner (a table for 10 costs £1,000). Among the speakers will be Lady Olga Maitland MP.

EYE TOLD YOU SO...

STRANGE how recent national media "exclusives" about Birmingham's Small Heath constituency bear such a resemblance to articles published in the *Eye* over the past few years.



"Damn!"

AD NAUSEAM

BRIAN SEWELL, the London *Evening Standard*'s confirmed art critic, has proved a traitor like his beloved mentor Anthony "Poussin" Blunt.

"I vowed, when I began to write about cars, that I would never review a Japanese model," he wrote a year ago in the rag's weekly magazine after trying a Suzuki. "It was my small revenge on a nation that hunts whales and dolphins (I no longer ski in Norway) and is not over-scrupulous in other environmental matters."

Sewell is not over-scrupulous himself in choosing his causes. As Japanese and Norwegian whalers roamed the seas last summer — with Japan extending its slaughter into the north Pacific — Sewell, fortified by a four-figure fee, was lending his absurd voice to Kirin lager for a three-month ad campaign on London's Capital Radio. Kirin is a Japanese beer.

BUSINESS *Woman* magazine, relaunched as *Top Woman*, carried a cover picture recently of "top woman" Anita Roddick and declared it was the magazine for women in law, education, finance, politics, management, marketing and property.

The editorial inside was equally pious, set out its mission to campaign vigorously on women's issues. Shame no one told the advertising department. Opposite the leader was a full page advertisement for... vacuum cleaners.

UTILITY ROUNDUP

THE gas regulator Clare Spottiswoode has been reported to the ombudsman for her delay in fighting pollution. The referral should produce a ruling on whether she and the other privatised utility regulators can defy parliament.

A year ago John Major launched a white paper called *Climate Change*. He promised to start energy-efficiency programmes by last autumn, offering grants for measures that would reduce the amount of gas people burn. Spottiswoode, however, did nothing: indeed, the gas queen is strongly opposed to using gas profits to cut demand for ideological reasons, and she even held out through the winter when gas use increases.

After waiting for a year, Andrew Warren of the Association for the Conservation of Energy wrote to the citizen's charter unit at the cabinet office asking why there was a delay. Like an echo, within seven days Spotti had announced that she would "look again" at two small and largely insignificant schemes offering low-interest loans which have to be repaid and which cost next-to-nothing — and will benefit the atmosphere by the same amount. She rejected five others because they were "not commercially viable" (ie not profit-making).

Warren then complained to the MP Bob Ainsworth, a member of the select committee on the environment, which has had many clashes with Spotti. He has asked Ainsworth for help in forcing the regulator to accept that she has to introduce energy-saving measures, whatever her private views. Ainsworth has passed the complaint on to the ombudsman for what should be a ruling with implications for all the privatised utilities.

SO Stephen Littlechild, electricity regulator, has at last struck out and said he might do something about the inflated profits of the electricity distributors, the regional electricity companies (RECs), who send out the bills.

His warning aroused anguished cries from City editors, stock exchange buffs and a handful of wounded speculators. What he was doing in fact only reinforced advice given secretly to the City at the time of privatisation by former energy secretary John Wakeham: sell the shares quick before something nasty happens.

Littlechild's problem was that he was too clever by half. He assumed that if he announced checks on the distributors, the RECs, everyone would understand that he was not going to do anything nasty to the generators, National Power and PowerGen, which would *help* the government's sale of 40 percent of its shares in the duopoly. But the City panicked and assumed that getting tough on the RECs would eventually hit the generators. So share prices crashed.

THE long-awaited report into the Oxwich Bay health scare (*Eyes passim*) has turned out to be a huge whitewash.

This is not the fault of Dr Dorothy Wright, the director of communicable disease control for West Glamorgan health authority who carried out the study, but thanks to the terms of reference for the inquiry and the evidence provided.

Dr Wright investigated 21 cases of people suffering ill health after bathing in the bay and found that although six had symptoms of neurological illness, no viral cause was established. But her conclusion that no link could be found between water pollution and the neurological diseases came as no surprise... the inquiry failed to test the water there! This was because the National Rivers Authority and Welsh Water were involved in setting up the inquiry, its terms of reference and much of the evidence.

Although Dr Wright examined microbiological trends and bathing water records, this was largely meaningless as no test was made for the presence of viruses when the diseases were contracted.

As the official inquiry failed to carry out such obvious and basic research, the parents of Cassie Lewis, a teenager paralysed since swimming in the bay last August, are to commission their own independent water tests to try to identify the virus she is suffering from. They will have to fund this themselves while Welsh Water (profit last year: £155 million) pumps vast amounts of untreated sewage into the Severn estuary upstream from Oxwich.

DOING THE ROUNDS

"INSTITUTIONS," as Bertrand Russell put it, "are to be judged by the good or harm they do to individuals." The latest Office of Population Censuses and Surveys figures show that nurses top the league for female suicides, with 153 ending it all between 1990 and 1992. The second most at risk group is female doctors, and seven of the top ten high risk groups are professions related to medicine.

● THE latest **west Midlands** trolley watch figures have uncovered 8,000 patients loitering without a bed for three hours or more in the last couple of months. **South Birmingham acute unit (SBAU)** topped the table with 18 patients on wheels for more than eight hours. SBAU, **City hospital** and **Good Hope hospital** each had more than a thousand "outliers", with total figures up by 1,700 compared to last April to July. As Mrs Bottomley put it: "Under the patient's charter, no patients should have to wait long for a bed." They shouldnt, but they do.

● **BUPAs** new price list has angered consultants who have had some of their fees cut. Some BUPA subscribers are also feeling the pinch with 27,000 rejected claims a month (17.4 percent). BUPA itself is doing very nicely thank you. The providents profits before tax last year were up £13.1 million to £54.3 million — enough to fund a chief executive salary of £536,000. As their TV campaign says: "Its just amazing."

● THE NHS reforms have at least made medical decision making easier. A **Nottingham** GP recently referred a patient with complex back pain to the **Queens medical centre** for consideration of an MRI scan. The hospital wrote back and agreed that on purely clinical grounds the scan should go ahead, and gave the patient a date in 14 days. This was swiftly followed by another letter that said, on purely financial grounds, the GP was not a fundholder and therefore the scan could not go ahead. No he knows not to even bother trying. Easy life.

● FUNDHOLDING GPs at **Atherstone** surgery in **Warwickshire** are threatening to take their health authority to court if they dont get more money. The practices 3 percent budgets rise is not quite enough to cope with the 14 percent increase that local hospitals are charging for their operating costs.

Also going to court (again) is Mrs Bottomley, courtesy of **Manchester local medical committee**. The enraged GPs are still trying to claw back £250,000 of general medical services funds that their local FHSA spent in 1992 on "ghost facilities and useless projects", when it should have been used to reimburse them for services rendered (*Eyes passim*). Virginias counsel has admitted there was "maladministration at the very least" in the use of the funds, but has refused to make up the deficit.

OLD JOKES REVISITED: No. 94

● VALERIE McINTOSH, a district nursing sister who lodged 81 complaints about management failures, working conditions and patient care at **Cornwall healthcare trust**, has had eight of them upheld by a trust committee. She has also been sacked.

Also on the move is Michael Murray, dismissed as chief executive at **Staffordshires Foundation trust**. The decision to sack him was taken by trust chairman Roy Trainor and the rest of the board behind closed doors while he was absent on sick leave. Mr Murray, who has worked for the trust for 10 years, received the news by accident on a home visit by the hospital chaplain, 24 hours after the rest of the hospital staff were told. The reasons for the dismissal are not entirely clear.

● THE **NHS executive** has been cautioned by cabinet secretary Sir Robin Butler for distributing £13,000 worth of leaflets to GPs containing "extensive utterings from Mrs Bottomley". *Purchasing in Practice*, which uses taxpayers money to give busy doctors a politically unbiased and rational account of the reforms, was littered with gems from Virginias Tory conference speech. "Were not going to sell it off, but were not going to sell out on it either. (Pause for applause). In making difficult decisions, we face facts — we solve the problems, we deliver the results" (Standing ovation). DoH officials defended the article on the grounds that "it informed those working in the NHS of what was an important announcement about policy."

● **NOTTINGHAM community health trust** is facing a £400,000 compensation claim from Ian While, an NHS supplies broker, who claims the NHS supplies authority indulged in "veiled threats and anti-competitive practices", resulting in the cancellation of his contract with the trust and financial ruin.

● **WEST Yorkshire health authority** has sent unilateral rationing plans to all GPs in **Kirklees and Calderdale FHSA** "to eliminate ineffective and unnecessary treatments". Out goes surgery for religious reasons, whilst sterilisation reversal, tattoo removal, breast augmentation, correction of inverted nipples and nose-jobs will only be done "in exceptional circumstances". Specialist allergy treatment and in-vitro fertilisation become "limited by budgets and criteria". As local medical committee chairman Dr Ajit Mehrota put it: "Any decision to ration should be reached through proper, open public debate."

● WHERE have all the doctors gone? Not into obstetrics, it seems. Thirty two percent of the juniors who passed their membership into the royal college between 1985 and 1989 have left the speciality. General practice is equally unattractive, with only four people applying for **Ipswich hospital NHS trusts** eight trainee posts last year. The **Swansea** scheme has filled just five out of nine places (in 1985, 46 applicants contested 12 places), the **London Royal hospital** has got no takers for four posts with 12 days to go, as has **Oxfords Horton general hospital trust**.

● GORDON SMITH, **Caterham Lifecare trusts** quality monitor, has been praising his monitoring. "Its helped the consistency of the service. Now we know everyone is receiving the same amount of care." Reassuring to know that an ingrowing toenail gets the same time and attention as a cardiac arrest.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The governments hugely successful 1992 dentistry reforms have meant 800,000 patients have "disappeared" from NHS lists at the rate of 850 a day.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

FOR the ministry of agriculture (aka Maffia) to launch its new Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) on April fool's day was inspired — the meat industry is not the only one being taken for a fool.

The taxpayer has had to meet the £13 million start-up cost of the service — not least to fund such necessities as corporate ties (tastefully displaying the MHS logo) for the 1,000 staff.

Meat eaters will also appreciate having to fund the £53 million the "service" will extract for providing "cost-effective" meat inspection — even though local councils were doing the job for £8 million less.

Another April fool was Philip Corrigan, the £50,000 a year MHS operations director who resigned his post before the "service" had even started. His former job was as a vet with the Australian equivalent of the MHS. But he had been touching his "customers" in the meat industry for a contribution to his expenses at a conference on food hygiene in Berlin last year and was facing six disciplinary charges from his former employer.

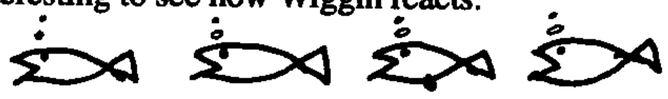
As if all that were not bad enough, more than 75 MPs signed an early day motion calling for the MHS's abolition. If a few more MPs add their names to the list and force a debate, it could be the shortest-lived quango in history.

ANOTHER Maffia quango under scrutiny by MPs is the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), shortly to be examined by the agriculture select committee. This was the organisation that licensed the organophosphorus (OP) sheep dips (products similar to the Sarin nerve gas used in the Tokyo underground) which have affected hundreds of farmers.

The trouble is that, unlike his predecessor Sir Richard Body, the current committee chairman, Jerry Wiggin, shows little interest in the woes of pesticide victims. He is more concerned exercising his spleen on the VMD for the delay and costs the pharmaceutical companies experience in bringing new products to the market.

Last week 100 OP victims, dismayed at his line, delivered a bundle of evidence to the committee, describing their suffering. Another group presented a petition bearing 17,000 signatures, asking for more research on the effects of the pesticide Lindane and its links with breast cancer in Lincolnshire.

Much of the evidence submitted has already been passed to the VMD, which it has so far ignored, possibly because its scientists are so well supported by the pharmaceutical industry. It will be interesting to see how Wiggin reacts.

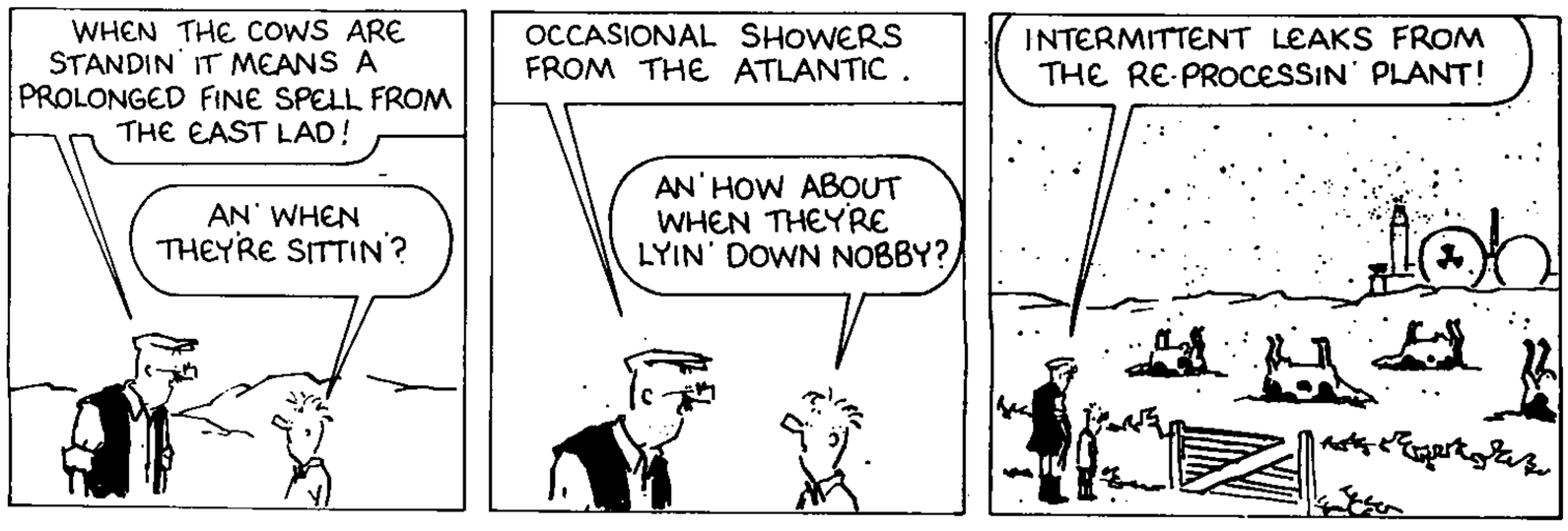


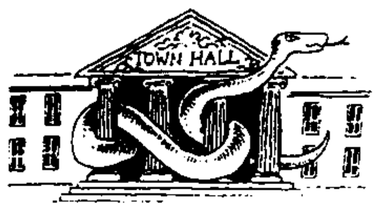
COMPARED with the hundreds of letters in the press supporting the Canadian fishermen, those backing the Spanish have been as rare as hens' teeth. Nevertheless, last week as the Spaniards continued to lie about their pillage of the high seas the *Times* managed to find one champion. His name? Señor Alfonso *Torrents dels Prats*. Does this mean the same in Spanish as it does in English?

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


WHEN THE COWS ARE STANDIN' IT MEANS A PROLONGED FINE SPELL FROM THE EAST LAD!
AN' WHEN THEY'RE SITTIN'?
OCCASIONAL SHOWERS FROM THE ATLANTIC.
AN' HOW ABOUT WHEN THEY'RE LYIN' DOWN NOBBY?
INTERMITTENT LEAKS FROM THE RE-PROCESSIN' PLANT!



THE Rotten Borough Advertiser

THE BIG SUSPENDERS

A BIZARRE cat and mouse game is being played in Lambeth between interim chief executive Sari Conway and the borough's legal director Paul Lalle.

Conway had a shock when she returned to work recently after a day's leave and there was a letter on her desk from Lalle giving her notice to quit.

Jim Dickson and Hugh Jones, respectively the Labour and Tory leaders, denied any knowledge of the letter; and Mike Tuffrey, of the Lib Dems, said he had only given the go-ahead for it after Lalle claimed the two other leaders had already agreed to it.

The letter was then binned — and it was Conway's turn to put pen to paper. Lalle was due to see her on 24 March to receive his own suspension letter, but he failed to turn up. Conway then sent the letter to Lalle's Norwood home first by courier and then by post. To make sure he got the message the locks on the front door of the building where he works were changed and his office padlocked.

Lalle, who flunked a law degree at Manchester university, has been suspended over the quality of advice he has given: over the £5.6 million "missing" from the education budget and over Lambeth's recent porn ring investigation (see *Eyes passim*).

Meanwhile there have also been red faces in the council's press office concerning one Iffat Aziz.

She went on sick leave from her job as a press officer last September and received full pay until 24 February when she resigned. Despite the sick certificates, Aziz was not so ill that on Monday 5 December she could not start a new full-time job as press officer for the Middlesex Probation Service!

Aziz now faces an uncertain future. Conway has handed details of her actions to Inspector Knacker, and the probation service is determining what to do about her. How embarrassing if she became a client of her new employer...

Still, there is good news for detested education director Bebb Burchell, who faced questions about the education budget's "missing" £5.6 million and whose dictatorial style upset parents and teachers. Her £64,000 a year contract has not been renewed. Instead she got a £90,000 pay-off, £32,000 of which is thanks to a nifty clause in her four-year contract. The contract, which would have expired this December anyway, stipulated that if her post were not renewed she would be entitled to an extra six months' salary.

PS: Peter Camp, the housing director who is on permanent sick leave and under investigation, has just learned that three of his top officers have also been suspended. The reason is believed to be the millions of pounds in uncollected rents.

BEYOND OUR KEN

THE row continues over finances at Bent's Irish Centre, which Inspector Knacker and customs and excise have been examining.

Readers will recall how Bent East MP Ken Livingstone used parliamentary privilege to call Irish Centre boss Brendan Mulkere "a crook — in 25 years as an elected representative I have never been more certain of any sentence I have uttered". The VAT people do not seem to agree with Red Ken, however, and have written to the centre saying no action will be taken against Mulkere or the company.

This hasn't deterred Ken, who has stepped up his attack and urged MPs in a recent early day motion to "congratulate Her Majesty's custom and excise in uncovering conclusive evidence of fraud by Mr Mulkere".

Elsewhere, residents wishing to oppose a rash of new boozers in the borough — old banks, cinemas and shops in Willesden are rapidly being turned into licensed premises — face a daunting opponent at the licensing courts in barrister Aisha Henthorn.

Acting for many pub applicants she has so far met little opposition from Inspector Knacker. Funnily enough the licensing sergeant at nearby Willesden police station is Jerry Henthorn, hubby of the formidable Aisha!

Meanwhile Bent's decision to turn its departments into "businesses" means the unprofitable and unwieldy disability unit advisory service is to be disbanded (saving £200,000) while the very important councillors' allowances "unit" (cost £202,000) is to receive a £12,000 top up, rewarding councillors for making savings elsewhere.

So far only one councillor, Liberal Democrat leader Paul Lorber, has given his rise to charity, as he does every year. Will any other Bent councillor follow the example?

DECLINE OF THE HACKNEY EMPIRE

HACKNEY, home to a never-ending housing fraud inquiry, has sacked Ken Ostler, the independent investigator brought in to tackle town hall corruption.

Ostler, brought in because housing director Bernard Crofton felt corruption was so rife that no one inside the town hall could be trusted to deal with it, had been looking into allegations of a council house keys-for-cash scam which has led to 40 housing officers being sacked and 2,000 houses recovered. He had also been investigating town hall recruitment fraud involving immigrants with known false references being given jobs so the council could boost its ethnic balance.

However, Crofton has been suspended after accusing fellow officers of failing to tackle fraud, and a week after Ostler gave evidence in Crofton's favour, Ostler himself was summoned before housing bosses and his contract suddenly "terminated".

It was gruesomely done. Ostler was marched to his office and told to clear his desk. His pleas to be able to call his wife, make a coffee or even say goodbye to staff were refused. He then made the mistake of joking that perhaps his coat pockets should be searched. After this was done, council carpenters changed the locks. Then he was thrown out.

Meanwhile Crofton's hearing continues with the original five-strong disciplinary panel down to two: members walked out because they knew it had already been decided to oust Crofton.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

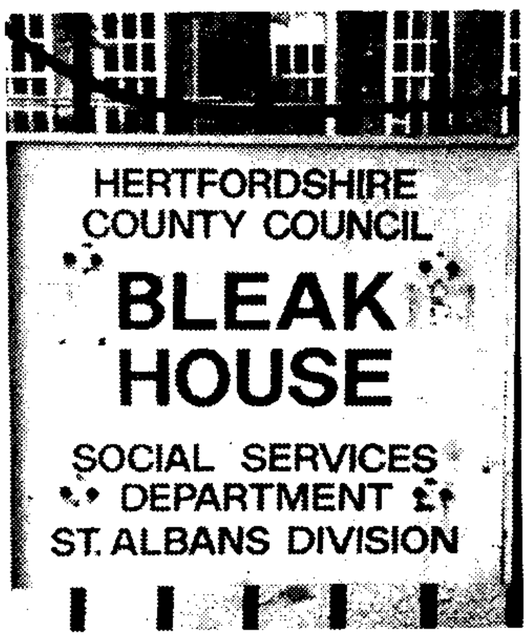
JIMMY McGOVERN's Murkeyside drama *Hearts and Minds* has provoked cries of "he doesn't mean me" from Liverpool teachers. Media interest has focused on Calderstones comprehensive where McGovern once taught and where Brian Davis, the head teacher, told pupils after the first programme that he was a happily married man with three children — not a bit like the fictional head who has an affair with a sixth former. This cannot be the same Brian Davis who, when aged 30, married a woman roughly half his age.

IN BRIEF

RENFREW: When we reported a while ago how councillor Paul Mack had been found guilty and fined £200 for assaulting a former girlfriend, it was assumed — naïvely — that he would slide into political obscurity. Indeed, his Scottish Labour bosses told him not to stand in the forthcoming elections; but hours before nominations closed the man chosen in his place, a Mr Taylor, cited domestic problems and withdrew. Paisley Labourites then held an emergency meeting and selected... Mr Mack!

MURKEYSIDE: Bitter feuding among Liberal Democrats has come to a head, with Inspector Knacker investigating the harassment of Frank Ruse, a Lib-Dem candidate in May's elections. The would-be councillor for Childwall has received unsolicited taxis, pizzas, Chinese take-aways, insurance salesmen and even a visit from Dyno-rod at his house. The final straw was his daughter-in-law receiving a call from undertakers claiming Ruse was dead and asking her to help with the funeral arrangements. Ruse even has an invoice for a bed he never ordered, with the phone number 225-2354 on it — the Lib-Dem number in the council buildings.

I-SPY



Submitted by M.E. Fordham

MIRACLE CORNER

ERNEST Saunders' solicitors, Olswang, have written a ferocious letter to the Mail on Sunday objecting to the following phrase in an article on 5 February: *"more recently, Mr Ernest Saunders, the Guinness defendant, gave hope to millions by his recovery from Alzheimer's disease."*

Wrong! "Mr Saunders was never definitively diagnosed as suffering from Alzheimer's disease," wrote Olswang's delectable Julia Palca to the *Mail*'s legal department. "The diagnosis that he was suffering from a form of pre-senile dementia was tentative, and it proved to be incorrect due to the difficulties of distinguishing early-stage degenerative pre-senile dementia from depressive illness and other purely psychological mental disorders."

So now you know.

QUANGO NEWS

DAVID GRIFFITHS, who exposed an expenses scam at Health Promotion Wales, has been rewarded: he has been sacked from the quango's board by Welsh secretary John Redwood.

After Griffiths revealed how the chief executive, Professor John Catford, had financed a torrid affair with an Italian colleague while he should have been working at a conference in Brazil, the fraud squad was called in, Catford resigned and later left for a job in Australia. Now Griffiths has gone too. He is of course director of education in Gwent, a county which, coincidentally, is not known for supporting Redwood's school-screwing policies.

IN THE COURTS

SINCE the lord chancellor's department and the lord chief justice issued "practice directions" telling judges to exert more control over lawyers who waste court time with long-winded speeches, one judge at least has obeyed orders.

His honour judge "Bomber" Harris DSC, QC, sitting at Kingston county court, now keeps three pieces of paper on his bench. Long-winded advocates are initially shown a yellow card. If they persist with lengthy or superfluous arguments, they are shown a red card as a final warning. In the unlikely event that the advocate still fails to take the hint, he or she is shown a copy of the relevant *Times*' law report spelling out that barristers or solicitors who unjustifiably impinge upon court time may be required to foot the bill personally for wasted costs.

TUNNEL VISION

GOOD news for Trafalgar House, which was given the Dartford tunnel under the Thames in 1988 as part of a deal for building a bridge across the river: the tunnel roadway is corroding badly and several tens of millions of pounds will have to be spent to replace it.

Why is this good news? Because the bill will be picked up by the taxpayer, of course, and during the work the traffic will still roll, Trafalgar House collecting the toll money of 90p a car.

Cliance Godwin, chartered civil engineer and *Eye* reader is puzzled by this and asks: "Does privatisation mean that for the cost of large maintenance problems the taxpayer pays and for profits the taxpayer loses?" Er, that's right.

A government spokeswoman explained that the corrosion trouble with the road was due to "latent defects" which had existed *before* the tunnel was handed over in 1988 — a principle that offers boundless possibilities to the privatised industries when things go wrong.

And who is to get the contract to do the tunnel repair work? Step forward Dartford River Crossing Ltd — a branch of Trafalgar House!

ON THE BUSES

REGULAR passengers and other "dreadful human beings" on Eastern Counties buses in East Anglia may be interested to know that a portion of their fares is being forwarded to the powerful, anti-public transport roads lobby.

The company pays a subscription to the ludicrously-named East Anglian Roads to Prosperity (EARP), which campaigns tirelessly for more public money to be poured into building new roads. Peter Brundle, managing director of Eastern Counties, sits on EARP's committee and argues that new roads benefit bus passengers.

His view contradicts that of, inter alia, parliament's standing advisory committee on trunk road assessment, which has officially stated that new roads generate extra traffic — to clog up town streets and delay the buses. EARP does not campaign for the bus-priority schemes which really would benefit bus passengers.

SIGNAL FAILURES

CONSULTANTS paid to forecast demand for new railway stations and lines do not have a clue: they are masters of the *under*estimate.

Cathays station in Cardiff opened in 1983 and reached its five-year target within the first three months. Dyce, near Aberdeen, was predicted to generate 70,000 annual journeys eventually — but it generated 340,000 in its first year. Twice as many people as expected used the Bathgate line, near Edinburgh, in its first year; and in 1987 the new East Garforth station, near Leeds, was four times busier than forecast.

Amazingly the "experts" have not learnt from these mistakes. One of the most recent new stations, Bulwell, near Nottingham, has attracted more than three times the predicted custom. It is anybody's guess how many communities in Britain are without a rail service because gross underestimates of demand made new stations appear unfeasible.

● ALTHOUGH Bradford council paid £300,000 for a new station to ensure InterCity services could continue to serve the city, InterCity now says it can't afford to provide services between Bradford and London as the new electric wires are energised this spring.

InterCity *does*, however, have money to waste on a daily train from London Waterloo to Cardiff and back, which — bizarrely — it regards as top secret. The 125 train has hundreds of seats and a buffet service but is only used by a dozen or so passengers. The train is a useful service to central London and the City, quite apart from its connection with Channel tunnel and other trains, but it isn't advertised in the Regional Railways leaflet for South Wales and Avon to Waterloo.

Regional Railways and InterCity do not want to give each other publicity, so InterCity doesn't mention the train in its own timetable leaflet for South Wales and Avon to London. Some Inter-City booking clerks along the route don't know about the train either, let alone the public.

'Dr B. Ching'

Letters

Private Eye

Knowing the score

Sir,

I refer to your thoroughly nasty three paragraphs in Football Focus (EYE 868) in which, true to form, you manage to score a netful of own goals.

You asked why the BBC was not tipped off in advance of the arrest of Bruce Grobbelaar, and suggested I might have the answer since I am the former editor of BBC South.

Well, Brian, I do have the answer. In a game of two halves you need some luck, and sadly the ball did not run for the BBC on the day.

They were not given the nod because the game plan did not include telling anyone in advance. How a number of journalists, photographers and TV crews happened to be at certain addresses is — as your ace reporters must know — the subject of an inquiry.

I trust I have now blown the whistle on your malicious suggestion that I played any part in tip-offs or otherwise.

As for being shown the red card by the Birtists, I remain,

Yours in extra time,
RICHARD HOROBIN,
Force Press Officer, Hampshire Constabulary.

Lookalike

Mellor

Lesbian

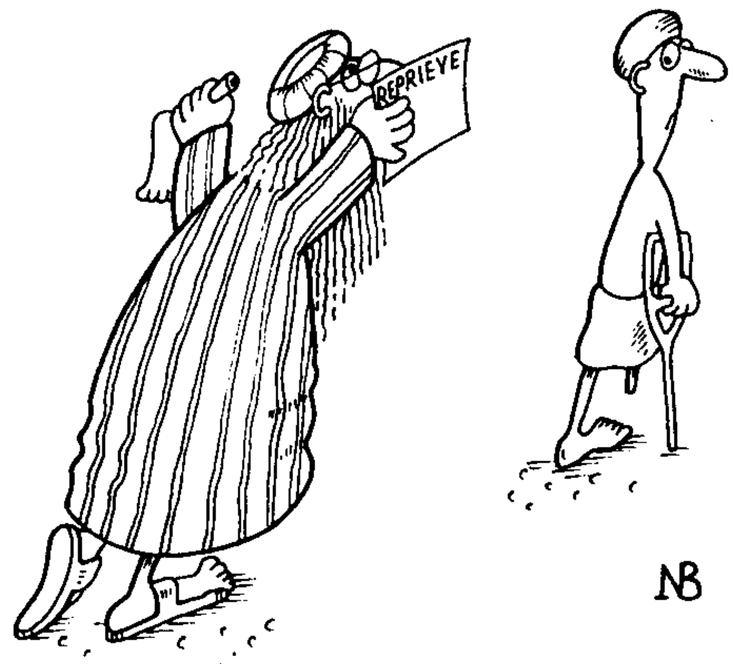
Sir,

Is the person so firmly supporting the RAF lesbian (EYE 868), the well-known Davina Mellorina, that untiring deceiver of womanhood?

I think we should be in the know about this.

Yours,
ROBERT BUSCH,
Emmen.

Pre-School Nursery Fundamentalist Rhyme



Hassan, Hassan, the piper's son,
Stole a pig and away did run.
Hassan was beat, they pruned his feet,
And he went hobbling down the street.

Please address letters for publication to Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG or e-mail to strobes@cix.compulink.co.uk (marked "For Publication"). And the Eye's WWW page is now available: http://www.intervid.co.uk/intervid/eye/gateway.html

Random example

Sir,

By no stretch of the imagination can my former editor, Robyn Sisman, be accurately described as "ghastly". She is one of the funniest, kindest, prettiest women that I know and her first novel SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP *is a piece of thoroughly enjoyable tosh for which President Clinton should get down on his knees. Perhaps the person you are thinking of is Gail Rebuck, Mrs Sisman's former boss at Random Century, who as you yourselves reported, sacked her despite her success with Robert Harris's* FATHERLAND *just before she had a baby.*

Yours,
AMANDA CRAIG,
London NW5.

One for the roads

Sir,

Thanks, Piloti (867), for the astonishing revelation that Strathclyde Regional Council's department responsible for Glasgow's roads is outrageously called the Department of... Roads! I can now exclusively reveal that I also have political charge of the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive, which, wilfully and with malice aforethought, concentrates on... transport!

Space is insufficient to detail all the errors in Piloti's piece, so I'll limit my corrections to a modest six:

1. Far from being obsessed with 60s-style Los Angeles freeway policies, my council's 1992 policy review stated: "The concept of supplying ever-increasing roads to cater for growing traffic demand is no longer tenable."

2. The M77 doesn't go within half a mile of Pollock Park.

3. We're not building the M74 extension. We've submitted a planning application at the request of the city planners, so that the Scottish Office, which takes over the roads on Strathclyde's demise next year, can't impose a planning decision.

4. The M74 was not confirmed by a public local inquiry back in 1989. The M77 was. The M74 plans have only just started public scrutiny.

5. Most of the 1945 Bruce Plan was scrapped by my council in 1978 and Piloti must have missed my recent announcements scrapping more parts of it — the Townhead-London Road link and the twin bridges across the Clyde.

6. Piloti says "Councillor Gordon does not propose spending more on public transport". He must have missed my recent announcements of a £150 million tram system for Glasgow, a £50 million Cross-Rail link, and a £78 million airport rail link — all to add to the £400 million we have invested in the largest transport network outside London in the last 18 years.

Piloti, who describes me as roads-obsessed and of promoting Thatcher's "great car economy", may be surprised to know that I don't drive a car and that I commute by public transport.

But buses run on roads, and vans and lorries can't travel by public transport. That's why I want an integrated road system.

Yours faithfully,
COUN CHARLIE GORDON,
Chair, Roads and Transportation Cttee, Strathclyde Regional Council.

Holy orders

Sir,

Re: In the Tearoom

Nothing can beat a C of E boarding education for knowing your Old Testament quotes. "Tell it not in Gath and publish it not in the Streets of Askalon" **did** *come from the second Book of Samuel, but was said by David, mourning the death of Saul and Jonathan, not Samuel himself.*

I am sure a quick check with the gentlemen of the cloth on your cover could have put you right on that one.

Yours faithfully,
LAURA HONE,
London SW9.

Another casualty

Sir,

I read with horror the many accounts of the nerve gas attack on Tokyo's underground. Perhaps this is a new chapter in modern terrorism that may even spread to Great Britain.

The effects would be even more devastating in London as I doubt that there would be sufficient resources to look after the 3,200 needing hospital treatment. Let alone the 603 people needing a bed, 13 of those being intensive care.

Perhaps, however, if a few porters got together and doubled as doctors, along with some kitchen staff as nurses, they could put some old trolleys in the corridors and use them as wards. A head count in the baby unit may reveal one or two of the slippery buggers missing and — hey presto — an intensive care bed. I'm sure we would cope somehow.

Yours faithfully,
LEO FILSON,
South Norwood, London.

Sound investment

Sir,

I gather you recently published an endearing photograph of an old man in a vest being aided by a young woman. Could you possibly reprint it as I am in the process of creating a module of work for children at school on the theme of "Helping the Aged". It will help illustrate so many areas in the national curriculum of personal, social, multi-cultural and moral development.

I would hope in this case that you would waive copyright to allow me to reproduce it.

Yours sincerely,
BILL CARR,
Head teacher, Ash Hill Middle School, Doncaster.

Powers that be

Sir,

David Fishlock (Letters, 868) claims that wavepower makes no contribution to public power anywhere in the world. What generates the power delivered by the Rance barrage near St Malo? Or doesn't France count as part of the world?

Yours (always),
MICHAEL CARLEY,
via e-mail.

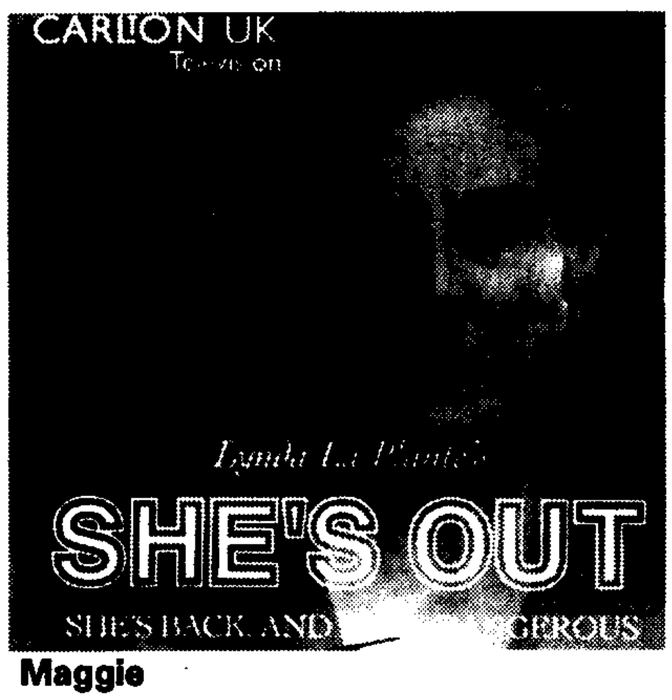
Lookalike

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed, as I have, the startling resemblance between Dolly Rawlins, the leader of a gang of ruthless criminals (now on television), and Margaret Thatcher, the leader of er... the Conservative Party (now in paperback).

I am sure they must be related.

Yours,
ENA B. LA PLANTE,
London.



Maggie

Dolly

Lack of energy

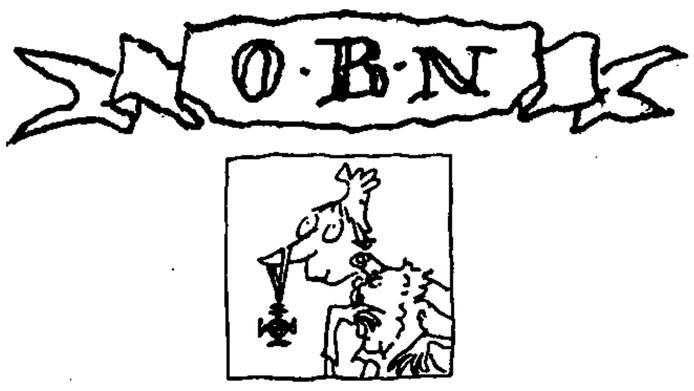
M'Lud,

I must rise for the defence on behalf of the EYE*'s esteemed energy correspondent in the face of a scurrilous attack by the uninformed David Fishlock (868).*

Your noted scribe is indeed well versed in all forms of wavepower, and has to my knowledge visited a working plant in Islay, rated at 75 million billion picowatts. This uses the oscillating water column principle and a Wells turbine. A somewhat larger one, of the Tapchan principle, is operational in Norway, not to mention various Clams and Ducks in university labs.

The lack of a proper wavepower programme in the UK is a scandal that gets few words in the press elsewhere. I trust that our shambles of an energy industry will continue to be lampooned in your pages.

Yours energetically,
DR.BOB EVERETT,
The Martin Centre, Cambridge University.

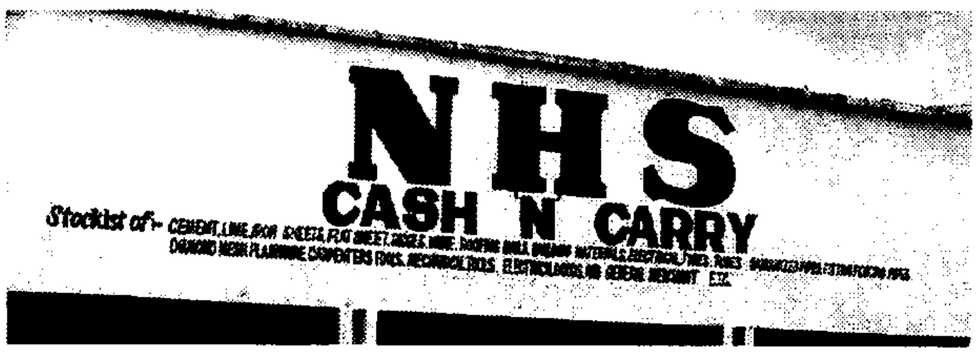


Certainly no one can hold a candle to [Martin] Amis when it comes to using words. Words? He can almost make them talk. I'm so covetous of his phenomenal and quirky way with language that I kiss the TV screen in homage every time he appears on The South Bank Show.

VAL HENNESSY
Daily Mail

Submitted by J. James.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



I-SPY *Mzuzu, Malawi*

Submitted by Daniel Crapper. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Action man

Sir,

Re: Rotten Borough Advertiser. Is the hero of your story on alleged derring-do in Westminster (Tenants' Laager) the same Mr Jonathan Rosenberg who for five years used his own methods to "dissuade" anyone from attempting to improve the conditions for residents on the Walterton estate?

Is this the same tenants' leader who associated himself with a letter written to building contractors to "dissuade" them from working in Westminster with the words "Should you decide to become involved, you would be working in a very hostile environment"... "Under these circumstances we would suggest that you leave well alone..." (WEAG 2.3.87)?

Can this be the same coordinator of the Walterton Estate Action Group who attempted to "dissuade" project managers PMI from working in Westminster by giving them a deadline to leave, expressed by "If you do not respond we will ensure that you will regret having ever agreed to interfere with our homes and our lives" (1987)?

Please dissuade me from believing it is.

Yours sincerely,
KATIE IVENS,
Westminster City Councillor.

A cunning planning committee

Sir,

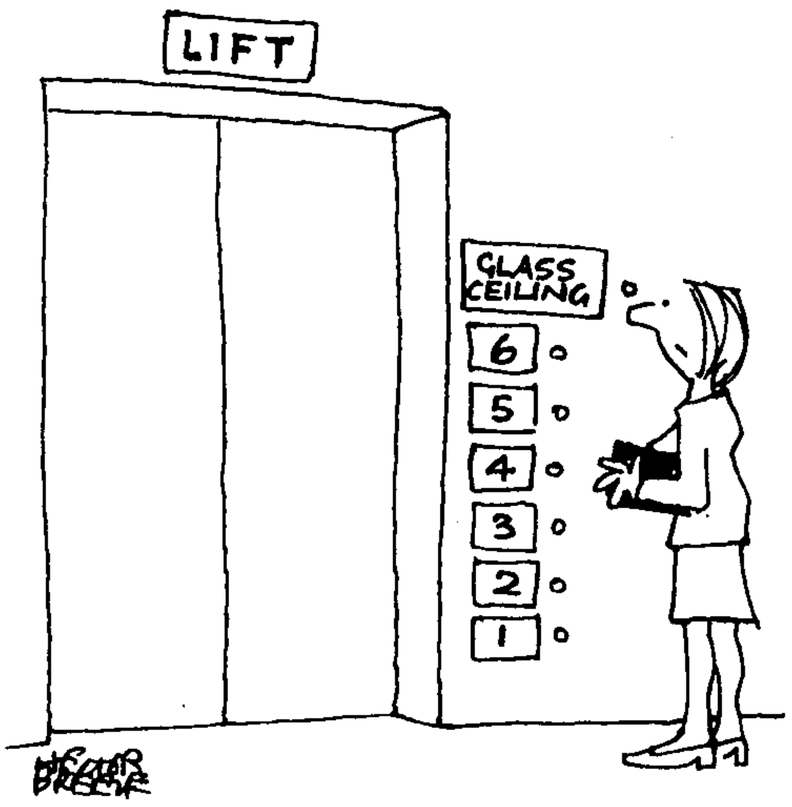
Your airing in February of Oxford's Lib/Lab pact on homelessness (Councillors first, homeless second) is most welcome. However, the two letters which have appeared since from Councillor Rhonda Riachi (24 March) and ex-Councillor Margaret Godden (10 March) seem a little light in the truth department. Let me explain:

1. Cllr Riachi WAS a voting member of the planning committee at the time of the planning application for the property that she now inhabits. This was confirmed to me by council officers and from perusal of the planning minutes.

2. ex-Cllr Godden could have let her property to so-called "statutory single persons" (Council-speak for homeless no kids) had she so wished without the need to comply with the building standards she refers to (which apply only to homeless families).

One other thing, the agent for the aforementioned planning application was none other than Gideon Amos, Liberal Democrat councillor, architect and, er, member of planning committee at the time.

Yours,
CRAIG SIMMONS,
Oxford.



Second prize:
Twenty leather bound Quiz Show dictionarys.
Observer

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

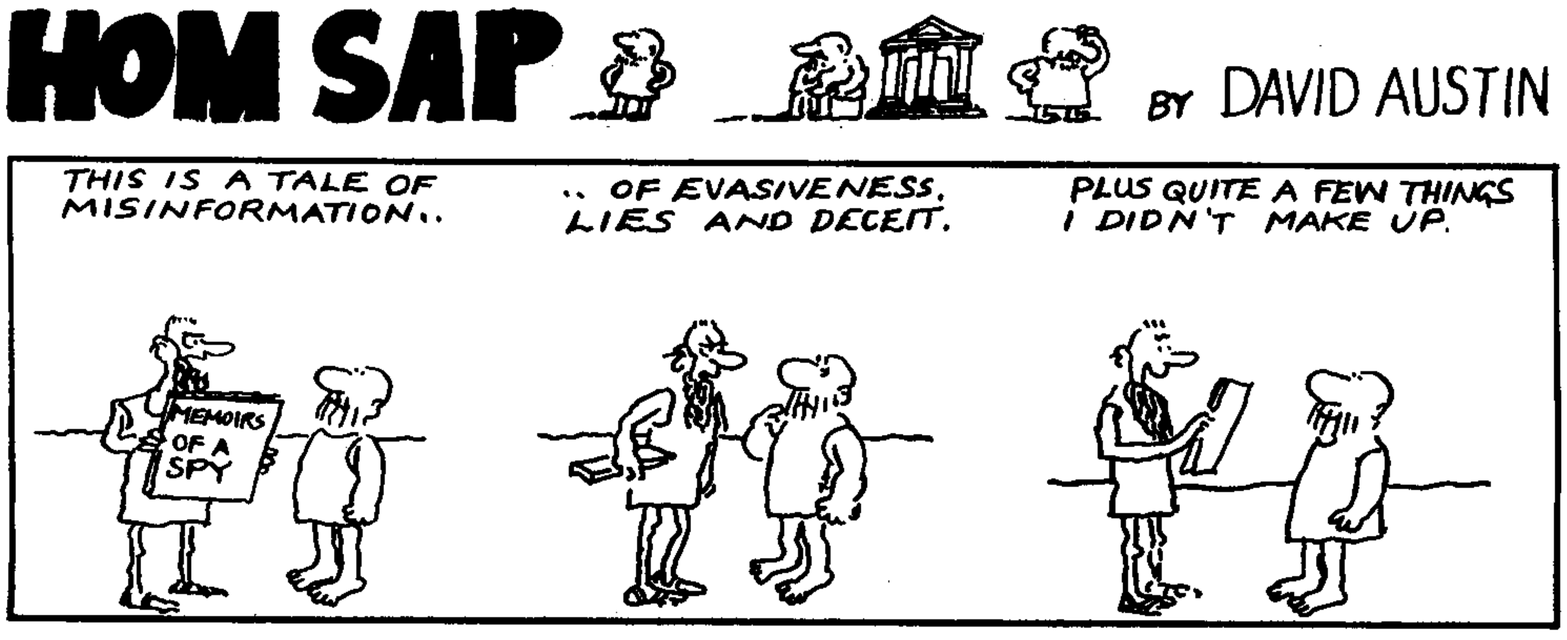
"We threw our dice into the ring and turned up trumps."
BRUCE RIOCH, ITV
(H.P. Eggleston)

"Red squirrels... you don't see many of them since they became extinct."
MICHAEL ASPEL, Radio 2
(F. Hlap)

"We all know that England are the best rugby team in the world and next weekend, when they play Scotland, we'll find out if they are the best in Britain."
JEFFREY ARCHER, Radio 5 Live
(Richard Cheek)

"If you're frightened of the fat, then stay out of the fire..."
ALASTAIR MACAULEY, Sky News
(Paul Browne)

Bob Monkhouse: *Where were you born?*
Contestant: *Goa.*
Bob Monkhouse: *Goa, that wonderful former Portuguese colony. Tell me, have you ever been there?*
Contestant: *I was born there.*
(Kevin Connell)


HOM SAP
BY DAVID AUSTIN
THIS IS A TALE OF MISINFORMATION..
.. OF EVASIVENESS, LIES AND DECEIT.
PLUS QUITE A FEW THINGS I DIDN'T MAKE UP.
MEMOIRS OF A SPY

Postcard from Phnom Penh

from Our Own Correspondent

ON 17 April Pol Pot might be celebrating: not because it's Easter Monday but because 20 years ago the Khmer Rouge marched into Phnom Penh to begin three years, eight months and 20 days worth of genocide.

Perhaps he will mourn the fact that on 25 December 1978 the Vietnamese kicked him out. But thanks to his friends he's still around — and so are the Khmer Rouge.

Installed in strongholds in the mountains of western Cambodia, near the Thai border, the Khmer Rouge control about 20 percent of the country. And who have they to thank for this? Trees, actually... and our beloved and increasingly undemocratic royal government of Cambodia (RGC).

Timber is virtually the only thing in our beleaguered country that is worth anything (some of our hardwoods are worth more than $1,000 per cubic metre) so our astute leaders sell vast concessions to foreign companies for as much as US$35 per cubic metre. They need the money, they say, to fight the hated Khmer Rouge. Trouble is, most of the trees are in the forests, which is where the Khmer Rouge live — so the Khmer Rouge charge the timber companies US$35 per cubic metre to cut wood. Thus, equally funded, it seems the war may go on forever.

This rather suits both sides. Pol Pot would definitely like to return to power, and our "democratic" leaders would like to put as much timber money as possible into their bank accounts in Thailand. To do this they need to stop people asking awkward questions. Nothing quite like a civil war and some scapegoat guerrillas to divert attention. And if people keep asking awkward questions they get shot by the Khmer Rouge.

So the trees get cut down, the 10,000 strong Khmer Rouge make tens of millions of dollars a month, the RGC remains an international beggar (having just coined pledges of US$1.8 billion from the international community), the Cambodian population face famine due to droughts and floods caused by deforestation, and leading Cambodian politicians, from the two prime ministers down, are becoming very rich indeed.

Unfortunately we are seen as a UN *success* story, so it is hard to make people believe all this.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

THE recent debate on fraud in the European Union got off to a jolly start when French National Front MEP Marie-France Stirbois accused the leaders of the European commission itself of fraud.

To the horror of Jacques Santer, the new president, Stirbois claimed Jacques Delors, the former president, and past and present commissioners Abel Matutes, Ray MacSharry and Sir Leon Brittan were "accomplices to fraud".

Santer said he had never heard an MEP abuse parliamentary privilege in this way, while the anti-fraud activist John Tomlinson, Labour MEP for Birmingham West, challenged Stirbois to produce evidence, saying her abuse of privilege should be referred to the Euro parliament's bureau.

However exaggerated her claims, fraud certainly *is* a problem. But an indication of how seriously the council of ministers considers it can be gleaned from the fact that the council sent no one to attend the debate in which the Italian MEP Rinaldo Bontempi and German MEP Diemut Theato outlined suggestions to try to tackle fraud. MEPs were outraged at the snub, and Tomlinson accused the council of arrogance, saying its conduct amounted to contempt of the parliament and of European citizens. One of the reasons fraud exists, he says, is because the council of ministers, who made the rules, had drafted them so badly.

MEPs were further outraged when the council sent an official and not a minister to a meeting of the budget control committee. British MEP Roy Perry wants to launch a parliamentary inquiry committee into fraud which could call ministers and national officials as witnesses. But it is unlikely they would attend his meetings, either.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"I have inspected Chan's underwear and confirm there is no wiring around his body," television personality Anthony Tang told the audience at a Daoist training centre in Hong Kong. "No trickery, no sleight of hand. What you are about to witness is *Qi gong*, a demonstration of pure penis power."

Tan then introduced the audience to Chan Tze-tan, 49, a Daoist philosopher, martial arts expert and fortune cookie manufacturer, who told them: "I have devoted my life to learning ancient Chinese techniques of regulating the body's energy, known as *Qi gong*, and have mastered the art of lifting weights with my penis. I began lifting small weights when I was 10, but it was only in 1982, when I attained insight into universal energy, Dao, that I learned to concentrate it in my vital manhood, and could attempt the feats you will witness today."

After warming-up by swinging 45kg discs back and forth with his genitalia, Chan removed his underwear for a final inspection. He then tied several red ropes to his penis and testicles, attached 159kg of weights to the end, breathed deeply several times, and lifted the metal discs 12cm off the ground for a period of 10 seconds. After a stunned silence, his audience respectfully left the hall.

Speaking after the demonstration, Chan confided: "I do not use chalk. My techniques are not only for weight-lifting. I can also cure impotence, premature ejaculation, and bed-wetting. I have 25 disciples at present, who also work at my cookie factory, and they can all lift 13kg with their private parts. We meet on Thursdays at 8.00 p.m in Temple Street. Admission is free." *(Eastern Express 8/2/95. Spotter — E.T. O'Connell)*

— o —

"Wind Fucker. *An obsolete term, known from a single record of 1599 'The kistrilles or windfuckers that fill themselves with winde, fly against the winde euermore' (OED). It may be compared with another kestrel name* Fuckwind, *given as a northern term by Halliwell 1847. The OED also records the present word as an expression of opprobrium in*

sources from the early years of the 17th century, e.g 1609: 'Did you euer heare such a Wind-Fucker as this?' To interpret the names Wind Fucker and Fuckwind, we need to establish if fuck, *attested since 1503, could once have had another meaning. We notice the cognate Dutch* fokken *to fuck, also to knock, then German* ficken *to fuck, in dialect to beat. Taking the sense of knock, beat to be more original, and assuming the same for English, we at once have an explanation of the bird names: they are literally wind beater and beatwind, in allusion to the beating wings of the hovering bird, as in the synonym WIND FANNER. The present bird names thus uniquely preserve* fuck *in its hitherto unrecognised, primary sense."* (The Oxford Book of British Bird Names, OUP 1984. Spotter — P.C. Wood)

— o —

"The Ayatollah has spoken. The fatwa against Barbie dolls has been decreed and will therefore commence immediately," a director from the College of Islamic Sharia told reporters at a Kuwait press conference. "Barbie resembles a mature woman and has nothing to do with childhood. This she-devil has polished nails, and wears shameful clothing and skirts high above the knee. Our children must be protected from this evil Western style of living, in the shaping of the body, the voluptuous fullness of the lips, and the blonde styling of the hair."

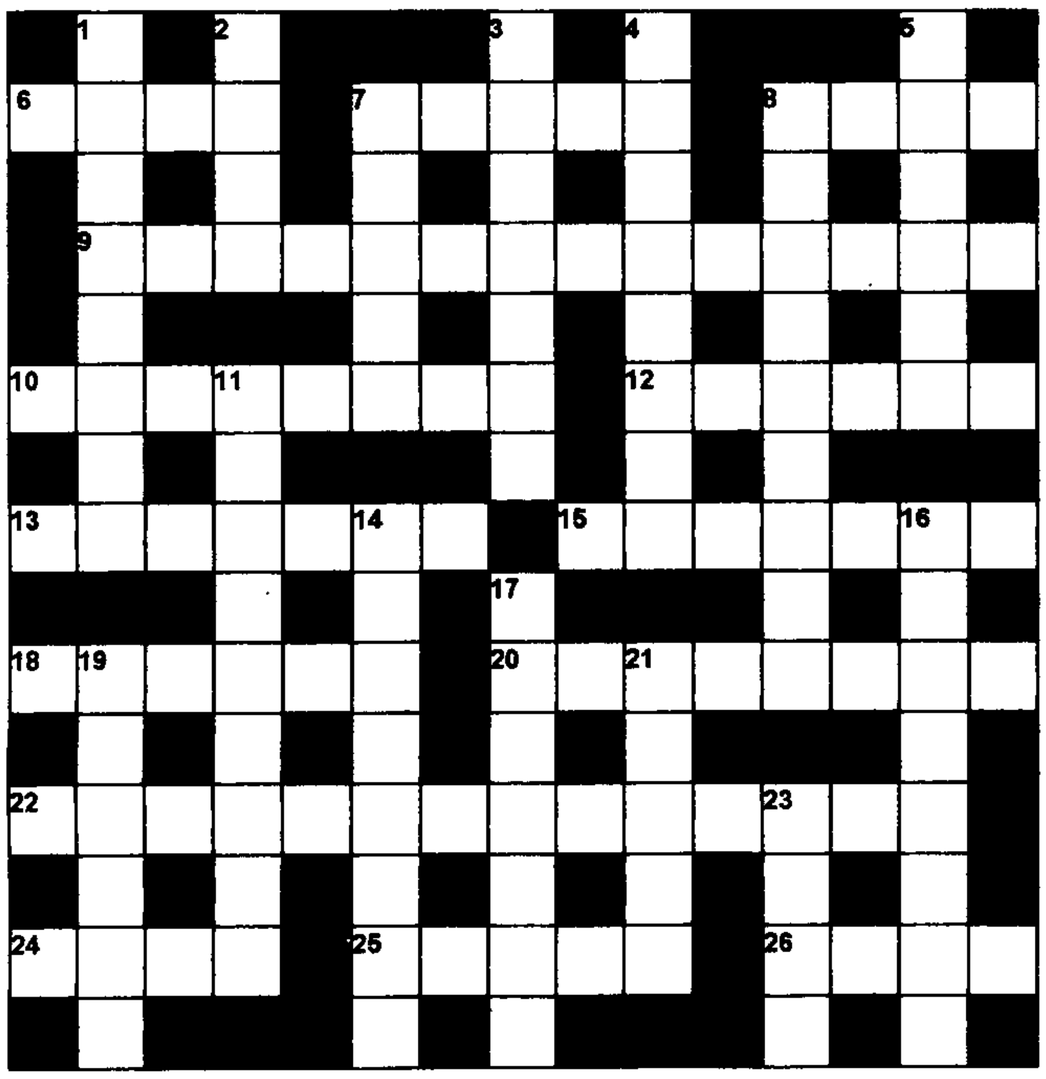
The pronouncement of the fatwa has met with mixed reactions in the Middle East. Scholars from the Cairo-based Al-Azhar condemned it as "generally incorrect. We hereby grant Barbie a clean bill of health." But several toy shops have been firebombed by protestors, following which the local distributor issued this statement: "In the event that the fatwa is to be carried out, I require clarification on a theological matter. Does the fatwa also include Barbie's friend Ken? And may I still sell Sindy?" *(Middle East Marketing Intelligence Report January 1995. Spotter — Christopher V. Prusakowski)*

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 25 by Cyclops

£100 Winner IAN HUTTON



ACROSS

6 Hence Brenda is to sod off (4)
7 Backward ruined city creature expected to lay old premier (5)
8 Unauthorised release taken by peer (4)
9 PM has sex appeal when pissed Yeltsin's about according to all those taciturn conservative supporters (6,8)
10 Once known as a hand job performer (8)
12 Plummy actor gives everything to penetrate Daisy (6)
13 Sounds like pub hunt — it could reveal why someone is late (7)
15 Dealer in spirits? Three parts pissed but elegant with it (7)
18 Di's out getting screwed by a film maker (6)
20 One of Brenda's dwindling subjects making love in local (8)
22 Familiar republican wildly damning Brenda's entering party political shenanigans (14)
24 Load of sheep, we hear, in the cabinet (4)
25 Big losers will never hurt you, as they say (5)
26 Hacks suffered by NHS, for instance (4)

DOWN

1 Civil Service irritated with Norma's diarist (8)
2 Survey Eve's top half and a bit (4)
3 House of Commons sort of pot? (7)
4 Brenda's people give you a thing or two to talk about! (8)
5 Dithering Croats' leader (6)
7 New York carrying can maybe for Reagan? (5)
8 Call round off when notorious bunker appears (4,5)
11 Cleaned up — made respectable sum of money (9)
14 Uproar not unfamiliar in a defunct parliament (8)
16 Political scandal: Reagan scuppered with it? (8)
17 Hardly first class, but the government keeps telling us it's improving (7)
19 So why such shady reporting standards? (3,3)
21 City almost haemorrhages... (5)
23 ... Yen's in shit — chronically (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 13.03.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 24

ACROSS: 8 Opposition 9 (See 12) 10 Dennis 11 Sinn Fein 12/9 Three-line whip 14 Snow 16 Allende 8 Big-Ears 20 Butt 21 Protestor 24 Guardian 25 Yacht 27 Smut 28 The royal we.

DOWN: 1 Speech 2 John 3 First Lady 4 Dissent 5 Inane 6 Two fingers 7 Civil war 13 Electorate 15 Liz Taylor 17 Labour MP 19 Princes 22 Ottawa 23 Filth 26 Clap.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

This is a very historic day. Apparently we are about to go to war over some fish. I was told this on the telephone this morning by Sir Leon Brittain. "Quite right," I said, "we must defend the rights of our fishermen against the Spanish." "No," he said. "We are defending the rights of the Spanish against the Canadians. I want you to put the entire Royal Navy on immediate battle alert to support our Spanish partners against the infamous pirates of the Royal Canadian Fisheries Patrol Inspectorate." After he had rung off with the words "That is an order", I called in Mr Hurd to explain to me what was going on. "It is very complicated, Prime Minister," he said. "It is very important for us to steer a middle path on this one. On the one hand, the Spanish are totally in the wrong. But on the other, the Canadians are totally in the right. So you can see that it would be quite inappropriate for us to do anything at all." "So we are caught in the middle?" I said. "Yes," he said, "like the fish." I thought this was a typical Foreign Office joke, so I ignored it, and asked him if nothing could be done. "Exactly, Prime Minister," he said, "and no one does nothing better than Mr Waldegrave. He is waiting for your instructions to do nothing as we speak."

Tuesday

Today is another very historic day. I have decided to give an exclusive interview to the Daily Telegraph. They rang up at half-past three saying that they needed something for page 13 because their interview with someone called Liz Hurley had fallen through. When their reporter arrived I made a number of important points:

1. I am not going to resign.
2. I am staying.
3. Oh yes.

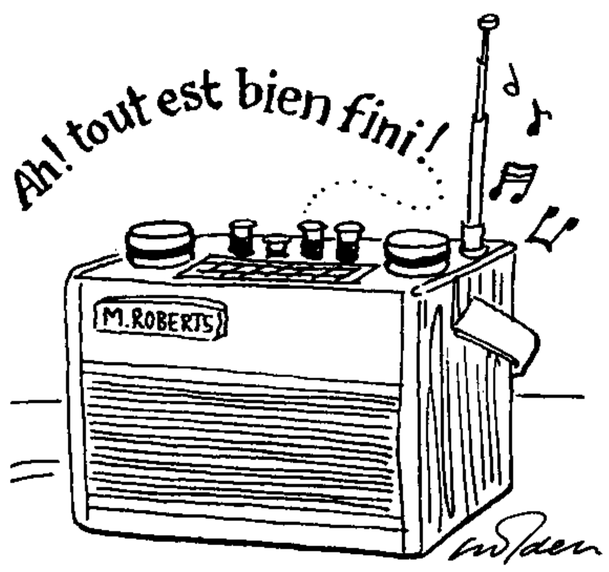
"But surely," said the reporter, rather rudely in my judgement, "everyone is agreed that the man at the top should go?" "You are quite right," I said. "Mr Hanley must resign at once." When I had thought about it, I realised what a very sound decision this was. After all, I had only given him the job in the first place because I had enjoyed his mother's performance in the film Genevieve, and because he had once bought me a cake in the House of Commons tea room. I now realise that these are insufficient grounds for making someone Chairman of the Conservative party.

Wednesday

I am not sure that I have taken the right decision about Mr Hanley. Not that I have taken a decision yet, oh no. He has many good points. Only this morning he asked me whether I could help him with 27 down — "scaly creature that swims in the sea", four letters beginning with "F". "Frog," I said, quick as a flash. "Brilliant, Prime Minister," he said. "I was just going to put in 'fish'." Mr Hanley is a very nice man, and I should be very sorry to see him go, if I sacked him, which I probably will not. On the other hand, we are looking for someone to blame when we lose the council elections, which of course we won't, and he might well be a suitable candidate.

Thursday

I have had a brilliant idea, which Mr Aitken suggested to me this morning on his way to Iran with a large suitcase marked "Guns". We are not going to blame Mr Hanley, after all. We are going to blame the BBC. It is all the fault of people like Mr Humphrys who ask rude questions on the Today progamme, which I do not listen to anyway, because my wife Norman has our bedside radio tuned to Classic FM for the Operatic Highlights slot. Anyway, blaming the BBC is bound to be very popular.

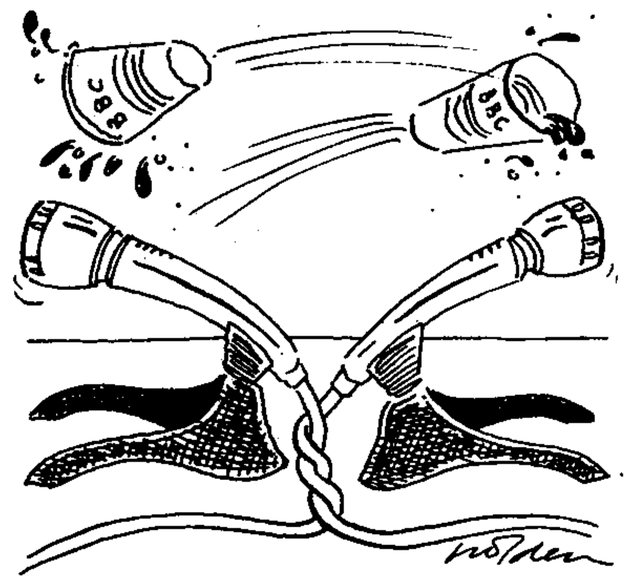


Friday

All the newspapers have got it wrong again, as usual. The Daily Telegraph this morning said: "Pathetic Major Lashes Out At BBC In Desperate Attempt To Divert Attraction From His Abysmal Failures. More pics of Liz Hurley pages 8,9,10 and 12." Fortunately the BBC must feel very guilty about this, because they rang up to ask whether I would come on Panorama to do a very important 40-minute interview in time for the local elections. Mr Hanley advised against this, saying it would not do us any good. Talk about being ungrateful. Perhaps I will have to sack him after all, and then he will have to do his own crossword clues.

Saturday

Today is a very historic day, as it is the Boat Race. My money is on either Oxford or Cambridge. My brother Terry rang up to say that he had been asked to do a special guest commentary on Radio Mortlake FM. "I am not interested," I said. "I am going on Panorama, which is much more important." "Well you might be interested in this," he said. "I have just been to the International Gnome Conference and have been approached by a very important antique dealer, who says that he has a garden gnome made by you personally, and that it is worth a great deal of money." "How can he possibly know it was one of mine?" I said. "Because," he replied, "it has the wrong hat, yellow instead of green, which is a



mistake you were always making, because you had your mind on Mrs Kierans down the road."

Sunday

My friend Mr Aitken has been attacked by the newspapers for selling weapons to Iran, although he did not know about it. This is no reason for him to resign. After all, we were selling arms to Iraq, so he was just helping to even things out a bit. I rang him and told him that he had my full support. For some reason he began crying and shouting, "No, please!" He is obviously having a breakdown and I may have to sack him after all.

Monday

Talking of sacking people, Mr Hanley has announced that there will be tax cuts to pay for the cost of the break up of the NHS, the education system and the welfare services.

This is in no small measure annoying of Mr Hanley since having tax cuts is *my* brilliant idea for winning the next election.

I made a speech about it in a place called Birmingham which is in the middle of England which is highly appropriate since I have decided to capture Middle England. Oh yes. As I said: "I am going to drive in the middle lane of the middle of the road, in the middle of the right, straight to Middle England."

This is my new metaphor. And I will not allow Mr Blair to come up behind me flashing his lights and force me onto the hard shoulder where I will break down and have to wait by my car for the AA men to come. Oh no!

My speech must have been a great success because when I asked the chairman what he thought he said it was "middling, to say the least". This shows my message is already catching on.

Tuesday

Today I flew in Concorde to America and my wife Norman asked me: "Where is this Middle England that you keep talking about?"

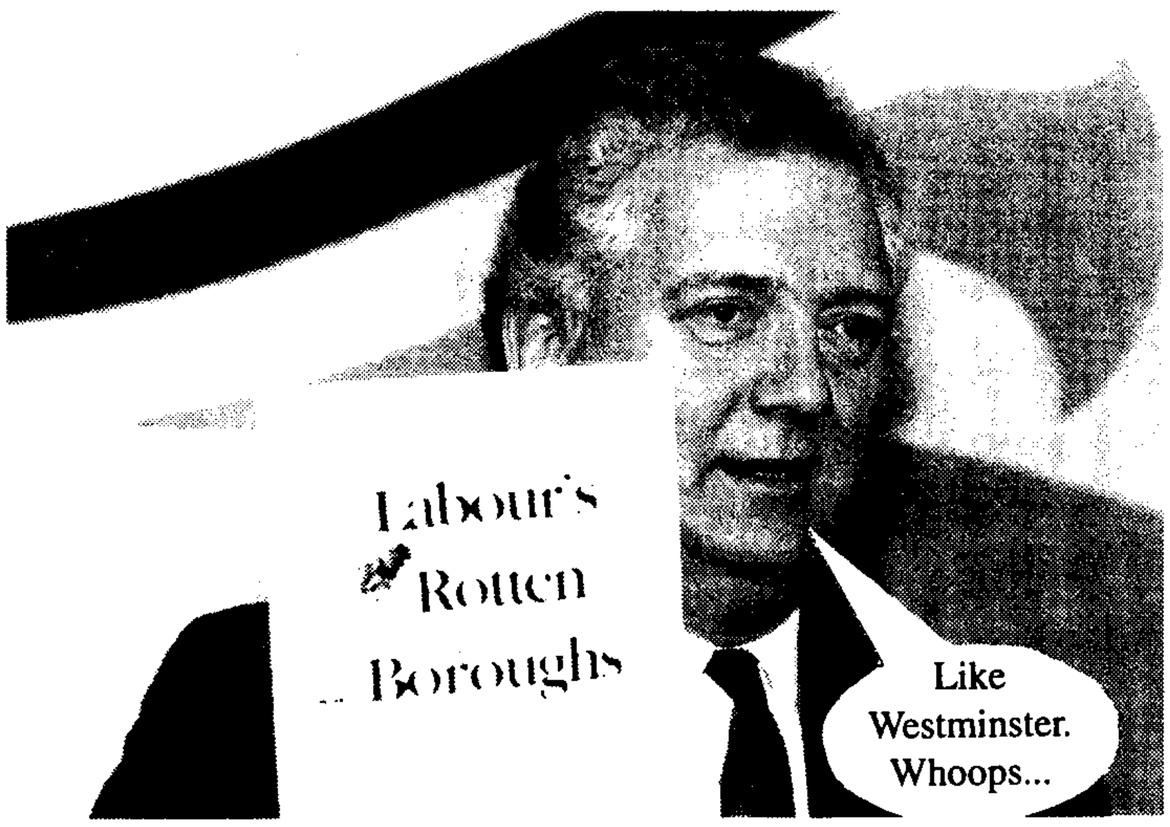
"It is down there," I said, pointing to a green patch you could see through the clouds.

"It is very small," she said.

"Yes," I agreed. "There will not be room there for both me and Mr Blair."

"Oh dear," she said with a funny smile which was very irritating, nearly as irritating as the complimentary packet of salted peanuts which I could not open to have with my refreshing fruit beverage, which incidentally I spilled over my trousers during some turbulence. Luckily Norman still had her hot towel to mop it up, even though it was cold by then.

NEW HANLEY GAFFE



AITKEN IN DRAMATIC NEW SHOCK

by Our Political Staff
Lunchtime O'Sleaze

THE world of Westminster was rocked to its foundations yesterday by the news that top Tory Jonathan Aitken had not been involved in any allegations of sleaze in the past 24 hours.

Aitken sensationally was not accused of:

- **Selling arms to Iraq**
- **Selling arms to Iran**
- **Selling arms to Mohammed Al-Fayed for resale in the Harrods Firearms Department (3rd Floor next to Islamic jewellery and Ladies Haberdashery)**

Cross Head of Nolan Committee

However Aitken last night hit back angrily at his critics. "I have no recollection of not being involved in any scandal," he said, "and even if I did I was not aware of not being involved nor of not having any recollection of not being involved. Would you please excuse me. I have a Mr Pol Pot waiting to see me about an invoice."

Mr Taki Takalotofcoke-upthenos is 72.

TEN WAYS TO SPOT THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Your guide to Britain's Feelgood Factor

1. **Nurses to go on strike over 1% pay offer.**
2. **Banks to sack 75,000 workers.**
3. **Interest rates to rise.**
4. **Prescription charges to go through roof.**
5. **Sterling crisis worsens.**
6. **Eddie George.**
7. **Everything's great.**
8. **No it is really.**
9. **Er...**
10. **Vote Conservative.**

Statistics compiled by the Hanley Institute of Advanced Statisticology.

If you've spotted a sign of the Feelgood Factor in your home please write to Russel Twisk, Reader's Digest, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

THE O'LUVVIER AWARDS IN FULL

by Our Man At The Shaftesbury Theatre **Ned Twinky**

Best Performance by Bad-Tempered Luvvie

T. Slattery for his performance of "Nicholas de Jongh is a cunt", described by the judges as a "bravura, tour-de-force of astonishing petulance."

Best Walk-Off Part in a West End Play

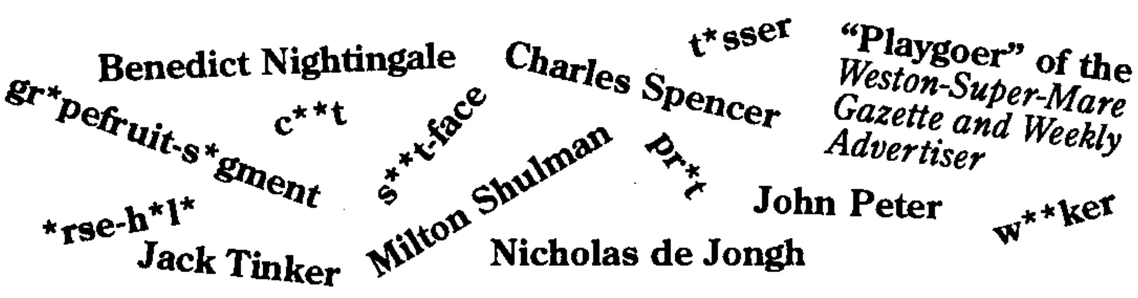
Sir Stephen Fry for his role in Simon Gray's *Not Mates* which won him a record writ of £500,000 from the theatre management.

Best Radio Tantrum

Sir John Sessions for his performance of "The *Evening Standard* Columnist Is A Fucking Git" on Midweek with Libby Purves, commended by the judges for "a breath-taking improvisation on the subject of kicking in Mr Mackay's teeth." *(That's enough Luvvies. Ed.)*

EYE THEATRE QUIZ

Match naughty Tony's witty quips with Britain's top critics and win a night of top-quality cocaine sniffing in London's fashionable Groucho club.



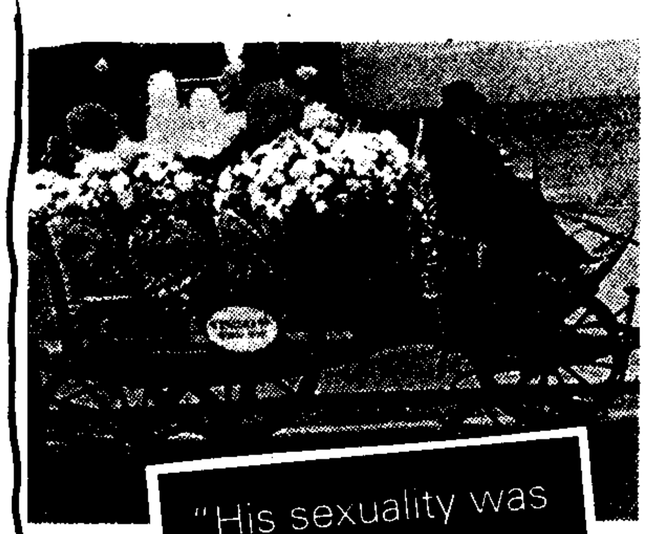
YES! IT'S OUT!

VIDEO LATEST

They said it would never be released!
Now at last

FOUR MURDERS AND A FUNERAL

Old fashioned British comedy of the type you hoped you would never see again! The story of the shy, diffident, archetypal Englishman and his refusal to get married due to the fact that he was a psychopathic homosexual. Includes hit Auden poem:



So. Farewell
Then. Ron.

We do not
Know where you
Have gone.

Is it heaven
Or is
It hell?
(We can guess. Ed)

© The Estate of the late E.J. Auden.

KNEE SAYS 'KUNG FU' DEPARDIEU TO STAY

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man On The Terraces With The Collected Poems Of The French Symbolists And A Can Of 100% Aviation Spirit.

THE SOCCER world was rocked to its foundations yesterday when tight-lipped Neasden supremo Ron Knee announced that the club's controversial £25 continental striker Eddie Depardieu is to stay with Neasden despite his life sentence for inflicting grievous bodily harm against a Neasden fan, Mr Sidney Bonkers.

The incident that had thrown the Neasden star's future into doubt took place during the needle relegation battle with Dollis Hill last January when Mr Bonkers had run onto the pitch wielding a chain saw shouting: "I'm going to cut your frog's legs off and have 'em in garlic, you useless French git."

Aargh! Urgh! Depardieu!

Counsel for Mr Depardieu, Mr Barry Halloran-Shaw, told Neasden Magistrates Court last month: "It was more than flesh and blood could stand. My client has a Gallic tempramment. He seized the corner flag and stabbed it into Mr Bonkers's head. If Mr Bonkers had possessed a brain, it would have done him irreparable damage."

The incident, which was reported world wide, led to a flood of offers from across the globe for Depardieu's services, from such famous clubs as Moscow Kalashnikov, Intermafioso Milan, AC Triad and Medellin FC of Colombia.

Brain dead ball situation

But last night the ashen-faced Neasden mastermind said: "Eddie is staying at the Bridge come what may. He is contracted to the club until January 3081 and when he finally comes out of jail he will be putting on a Neasden shirt, you may rest assured."

That Depardieu File in full

1974: **Edouard Depardieu barred from football for 2 years whilst playing for the Racing Club of Limoges.**

1976: **Depardieu arrested during goalmouth melee whilst playing for PSV Bruges. Barred for 2 years.**

1978: **Depardieu attempts to murder referee in European Cup semi-final at Interlaken whilst playing for Porto Valetta. Barred for 10 years.**

1988: **Depardieu releases poison gas into opposing team's changing room whilst playing for Athletico Kamikaze in Japan. Deported and signed by Neasden for club record fee of 100 yen (£25).**

STOP PRESS

Depardieu sold to Alice Springs Academicals, Australia for 10p.

HOLLYWOOD An Apology

IN COMMON with all other newspapers we may in recent weeks have given the impression that the forthcoming 1995 Oscar Awards Ceremony was the cultural highlight of the year, on the grounds that all the top prizes were expected to go to the greatest films ever made, i.e. *The Madness of Eddie George* **and** *Four Weddings and Liz Hurley*. **Headlines such as "The Brits Are Coming", "Hollywood Says British Is Best" and "Is** *Yes Minister* **Man Gay?" may have led readers to believe that the Academy of Motion Picture judges were an extraordinarily important and discerning group of persons.**

We now realise, in the light of the decision by these thick, vulgar Yankee dimwits to give 84 awards to such a worthless glorification of schmaltzy stupidity as *Forrest Gump*, **that the Oscar ceremony is nothing more than an empty, self-regarding charade which exposes Hollywood as merely a parochial tinseltown devoid of any critical faculties and revealing America itself to be nothing more than a colossal black hole of vacuity imploding into its own bottomless pit of narcissism.**

We apologise for any confusion which may have arisen on this point.

© All newspapers.

OSCAR TRIUMPH FOR BRITAIN

by Our Showbiz Staff **Ned Twinky**

CHAMPAGNE-style corks popped last night in the cramped offices of the Really Useless Cinemation Company in Neasden, North London, when news came through that they had won the much-coveted Oscar award for Best Foreign Animated Short Feature (Less Than Two Minutes) for their 30-second long surreal fantasy *Sammy The Spider Goes Bungee-Jumping.*

"I could not believe it when my mum rang up to say we'd won," said Kevin Catchpole, the 33-year-old Nottingham-born animator who, with his collaborator Keith Scrimshaw, created the character of the now-legendary spider, made from an ordinary household mop painted black, with two ping-pong balls for its eyes.

The prizewinning duo met when they were reading Film Studies at Loughborough Polytechnic in the early '80s.

Said bearded Scrimshaw: "We hit on the character of Sammy the Spider by chance when Kevin's mum found one in the bath when she came round to clean it one day."

The Oscar-winning classic took over 10 years to make, as each frame had to be shot separately and later coloured by hand.

"There were over 10,000 individual frames," said Kevin, "so you can imagine how much work was involved.

"We are now looking for funding for our new project, *Sammy The Spider Goes Bungee-Jumping II.*"

Poetry Corner

Lines Written By The Poet Laureate Mr Ted Hughes To Commemorate The Visit Of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II To South Africa

Dried-up river. Hot
Stone. Dead tree.
Parched earth.

Old wildebeeste a bit
Thirsty.

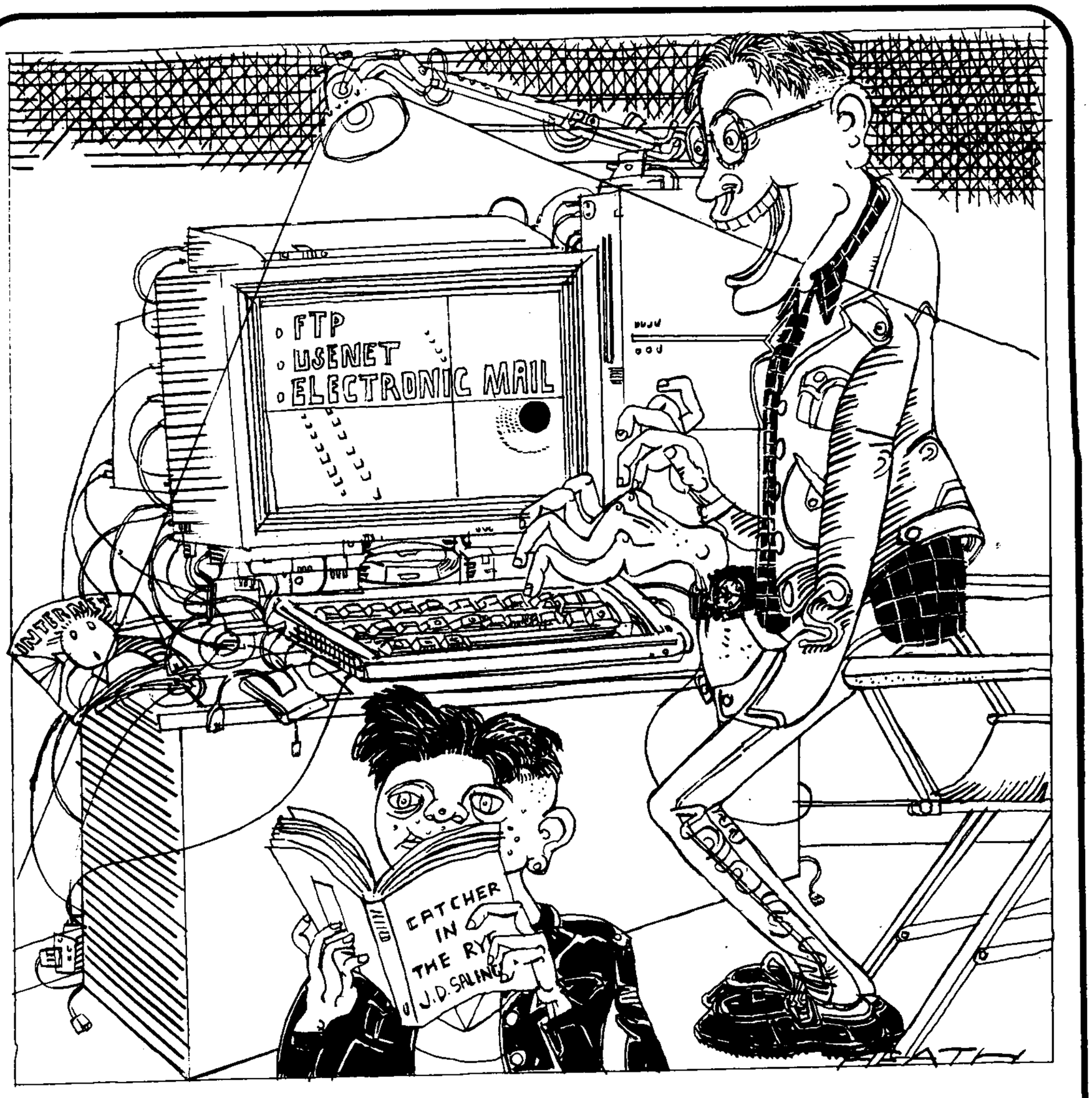
Waterhole dry.
Tongue lolling. Eyes roll.
Flies buzz.
Vulture hovers.

Old wildebeeste
Not looking too good.

Lion springs from tree.
Rip. Tear. Slash.
Snap. Crackle. Pop.

Poor old wildebeeste.
Rather washed up.

[Will this do? T.H.]
[Yes. Ed. of Indie.]



Great Bores Of Today.

"...it's brilliant all you need to do is configure your modem to autodial your service provider and then you're online to a global network which enables you to browse the worldwide web surf the newsgroups ftp to a site to grab an update for your display driver or anything you want now I've got an email address anyone can reach me instantly all you need is a PC with a fast serial port a V32 modem minimum or ISDN if you can afford it a good network connection to the PSTN and away you go it's as simple as that at 2am I was able to send the message 'hello I'm on the Internet' to Colin next door only it got bounced because he hasn't got his system installed yet so I had to ring him instead but anyway it's brilliant..."

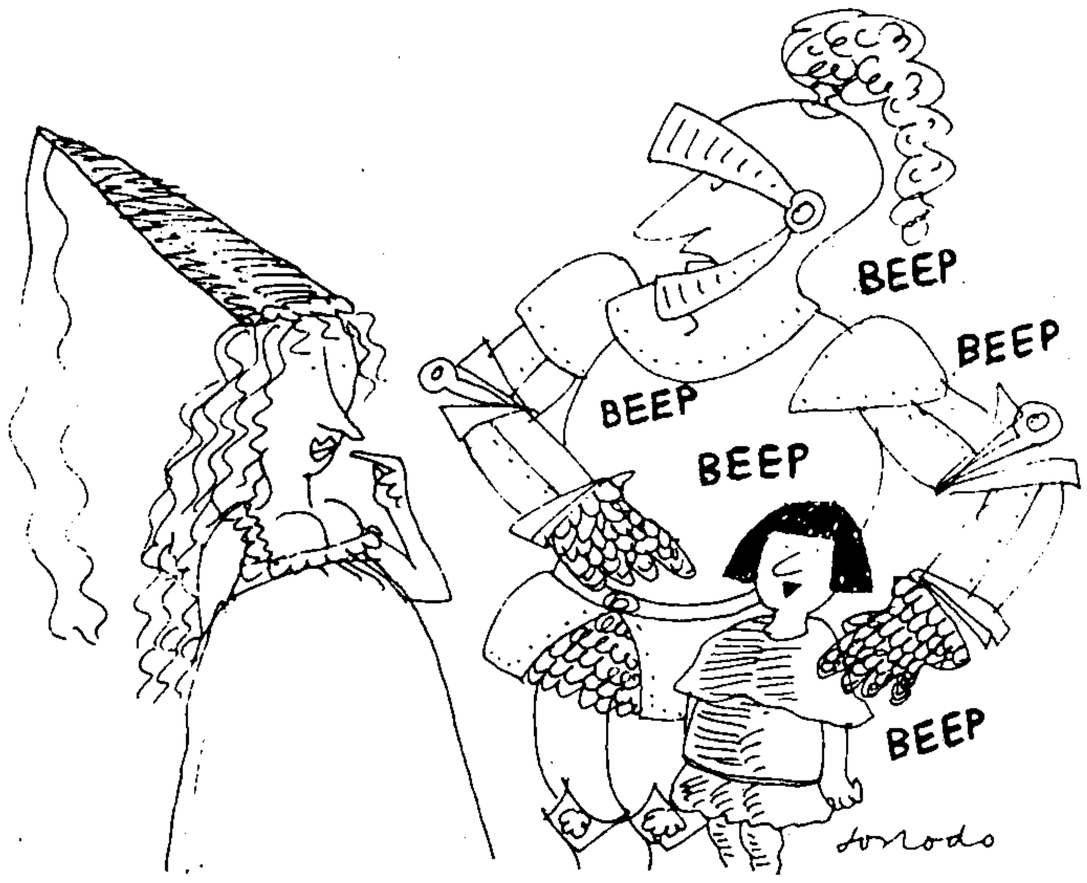
Old Sayings

Sky at night
No one's watching.

Celeb

LIGGER

WELL I WARNED HIM YEARS AGO ABOUT THE DANGERS OF GETTING TOO INVOLVED IN THE DEMON WHITE POWDER BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN...
I MEAN LOTS OF US CELEBRITIES GET TEMPTED. IT'S THE LIFESTYLE ISN'T IT? BUT WHEN YOU'RE OFFERED IT, IF YOU'RE SMART YOU JUST SAY NO.
COULD'VE DESTROYED HIS CAREER, THAT STUFF, YOU KNOW...
I'M JUST GLAD HE'S PULLED HIMSELF TOGETHER AND DECIDED TO PACK IT IN... AS A HIGH PROFILE FIGURE HE WAS BECOMING AN EMBARRASSMENT.
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN...
ABOUT AS STREET CRED AS FAIRY LIQUID.
SHOWBIZ NEWS
DANNY BAKER TO QUIT DAZ COMMERCIALS



"Sorry — it's my pager"

THAT PRINCE CHARLES SPEECH IN FULL

by Our Royal Staff Antonia Holden-Guest

"LADIES and gentlemen. I do think it's rather important that we stop running ourselves down as a nation, picking holes in everyone and being cynical and so forth. There is only one word for it. Appalling. I think people should show more respect to a person who is actually, you know, trying to do something positive, rather than just sneering at one and going on about one's private life. It's time we recovered our respect for the institutions that have made this country great. I am thinking, for instance, of the monarchy, which has been built up for hundreds of years. It would be so easy, ladies and gentlemen, to throw all this away, just because one person goes around appearing on television talking about his extra-marital, er, you know, thingies. And there's another great institution which I think we are in danger of taking too lightly. I mean marriage. I often think that we could learn a lot from the great culture of Islam, which teaches that a chap can have a lot of wives, so if he doesn't like one he can go off with someone else's. And another very good idea these chaps have is the *fatwa*. I wonder if we could have one, for instance, against Diana..."

TOMORROW: Dr Henry Kissinger on the role of superannuated politicians on the international free dinner circuit.

RADIO 4

THE TODAY PROGRAMME

John Humphrys: The question of bias at the BBC has been the lead story of the week, and this morning in the studio to discuss some of the issues raised by Conservative politicians we have... myself. Mr Humphrys, can I begin by...

John Humphrys: Could I make one thing clear before this discussion goes any further...

Humphrys: I'm sorry but I do think we are entitled to an answer, so if you'll let me put the question...

Humphrys: Certainly.

Humphrys: Are you or are you not guilty of bias?

Humphrys: Before I answer that, let me explain how a Today interviewer, like myself...

Humphrys: That's all very well, Mr Humphrys, but we only have limited time. So can I just put the question to you again...

Humphrys: I'm sorry, John, but I must be allowed to finish what I was saying.

Humphrys: Yes or no, it's all we have time for, because time is running out, and we really must get this point clear. Can I put it to you once again, in the very limited time we have left, are you a bit of a leftie?

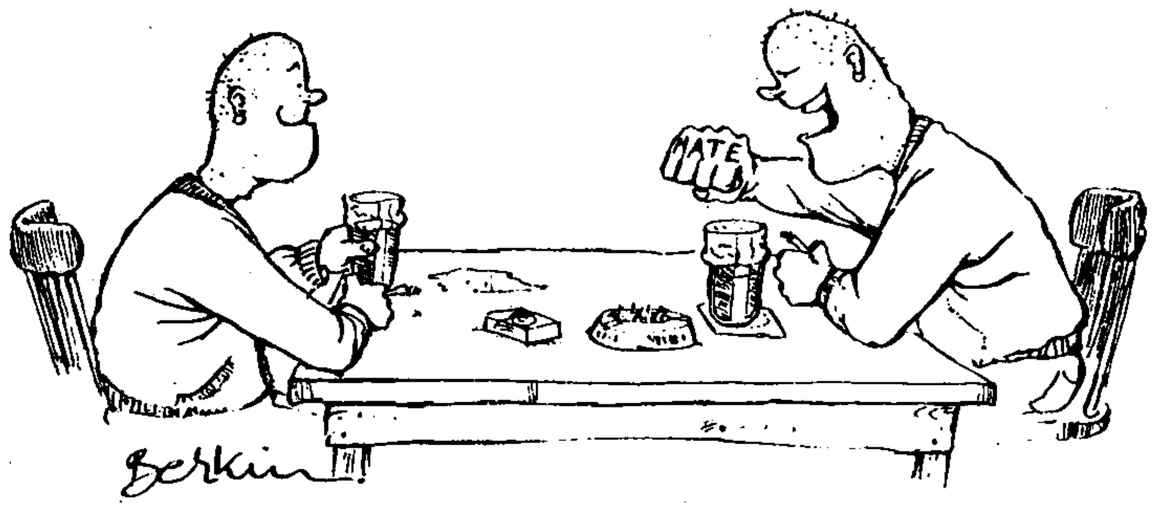
Humphrys: How dare you impugn the integrity of a professional broadcaster with years of experience? I demand an apology...

Humphrys: So do I *(long silence)*.

Sue MacGregor: Well, I'm afraid I'll have to cut you off there, because it's now 8.45 and time for Thought for the Day. Today's speaker is the Chief Druid...

Druid: Good morning, Brian, good morning Sue. Once again fish are in the news, and they seem to be causing a great deal of trouble. As my dear old granny used to say...

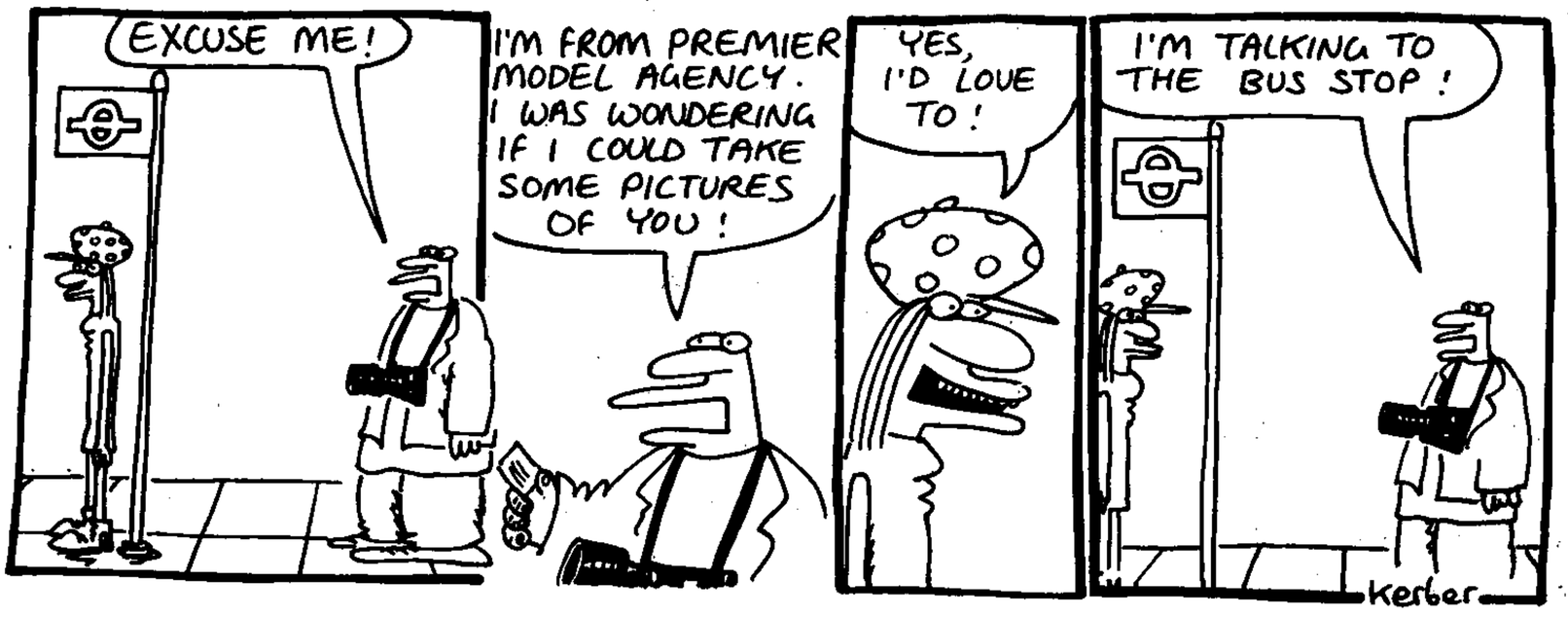
(Contd. 94.3KHz)



"It's my mission statement"

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber


EXCUSE ME!
I'M FROM PREMIER MODEL AGENCY. I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD TAKE SOME PICTURES OF YOU!
YES, I'D LOVE TO!
I'M TALKING TO THE BUS STOP!
Kerber

NEWS BRIEFS

■ **RIO** — With only people murdered at this year's five-day Rio de Janeiro carnival, the event was described as one of the most peaceful in recent years.

Overseas Jobs Express

When questioned by the suspicious police he could provide no concrete evidence that the cement mixer belonged to him.

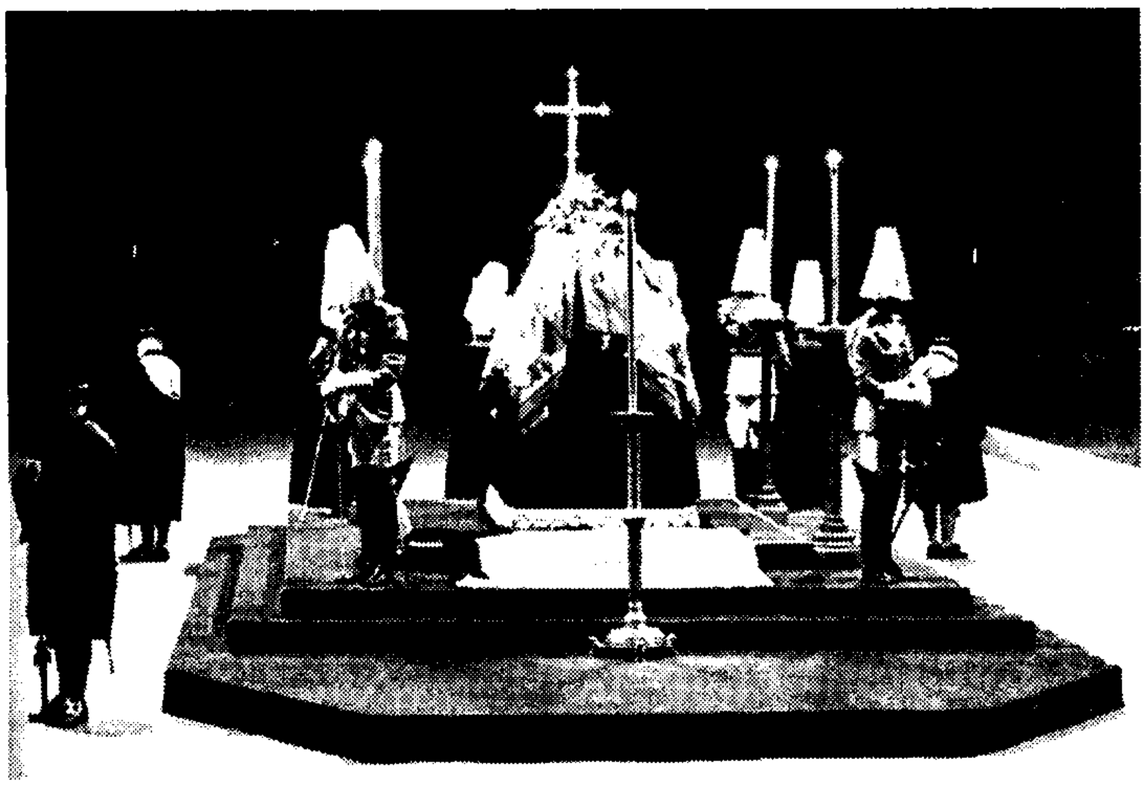
Harrow Leader

The BBC presents

THE STATE FUNERAL OF MR RONALD KRAY

A Nation Mourns

Live from the Bethnal Green Crematorium



David Dimblebore: ...and so here, in the heart of London's colourful East End, they have come in their millions to pay their last respects to the greatest Englishman of them all as he comes home to his last resting place through the streets which he loved.

Along the pavements they stand with bowed heads, occasionally wiping away a silent tear as they await the cortege of the man they knew as "The Guv'nor".

And here now at last comes the procession. At the front, in the black Rover 2000 with its headlights dipped in homage, Inspector "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker, whose arrest of Ronnie on that March day of 1969 was the greatest moment of his career.

Then behind him the hearse itself, drawn by six black horses of the Royal Housebreakers Cavalry, with their plumes reversed, carrying the mortal remains of gangland's greatest hero.

I can see the inscriptions on some of the wreaths now — "Good Riddance, From Your Mates In G-Wing", "May You Rot In Hell, Ronnie, From Mrs Jack The Hat" and "Goodbye Sailor, From All Your Friends In The Gay And Lesbian Community".

And then, with full armed prison escort, the dead man's brother Reginald, in his camelhair straitjacket, his monogrammed silver handcuffs glinting in the sun.

Comforting him by his side the much-loved figure of that grand old national institution, Dame Barbara Windsor. We all, of course, remember her in great films such as *Carry On Up Your Knickers* and... er... There she is now, waving to the crowd and graciously signing autographs, her familiar giggle breaking the sombre hush of the crowd. And now the procession is just passing the scene of one of Ronnie's greatest victories, The Blind Beggar pub, where all those years ago he thrilled a nation by shooting Sid "The Weasel" Driberg 14 times in the head, because Sid had asked him for a light.

And there behind, marching with their heads held high, some of the greatest names in Britain's underworld legend. I can see Harry "Razors" Phibbs, Chris "The Spiv" Silvester, Rory "The Knight" Bruce and Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson, his face still bearing the proud scars of his famous run-in with Billy "The Book" Rees-Mogg.

What memories they must have between them, these proud old veterans. They are looking older now, some of them having difficulty walking without their kneecaps. They know they will not see Ronnie's like again. At the coming out of the Sun they will remember him, on pages 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11 and 94.

And, yes, now, above us, in the clear blue March sky, the ceremonial flypast by the helicopter of Scotland Yard's traffic control division, keeping an eye out no doubt for any stolen vehicles which may be joining the cortege.

Oh, and there — one, two, three, four — the sound of the 21 Sawn-Off Shotgun Salute, which has only been accorded to the very greatest figures in our island's proud criminal history.

And now I hand you over to Anna Ford, who is waiting inside the Church of the Blessed Myra Hindley, where Cardinal Sin is waiting to pay his own tribute to the life and work of St Ronald of Kray... Over to you, Anna.

(Sound of middle-class woman being mugged)

Voice: Give us the bag, right, and don't say nuffink.

Nick Ross *(for it is he)*: And remember, sleep tight and don't have nightmares. Goodnight.

TURDS HIT CRASHES IN AT No. 117

by Our Pop Staff
The *Telegraph*'s Tony Parsnip

THE NEW single by the three remaining members of the legendary 1960s singing group, The Turds, burst onto the hit parade yesterday, with sales reaching 10 in the first seven weeks.

Crushed Beatles

The song, called "Raspberry Jam For The World", is a mixture of old tapes of the late Spiggy Topes and new instrumental material by the still-living members of the band — Reggie Veggie (guitar), Dave Doom (bass) and Benny Porridge (drums) whose real name is, of course, Lord Bertie Wheen, 14th Baron Wemyss.

Said a spokesman for the Turds: "The lads are all delighted by the number 117 slot. For years Turds fans have wanted them to get back together again. And now they have. And the record is a complete flop."

ON OTHER PAGES
Take That's 10-million-seller... hundreds of pix

DIARY

What happens when galaxies collide? When galaxies collide what happens? What *happens* when galaxies collide? This is the mega-question, you know: *galaxies having collided, happens what*?

That's the gammily effluent inquisitorial presupposition — the *question* — that rocks and tosses — never flosses, not *now* — the veined and corpuscled American football in my skull the neuro-surgeons know as my brain, intricated as a spider's web of phlegm, though disappointingly less tasty.

The speed of light is 186,282 mps and one light hour is 670,000,000 miles. This means that when "Martin Amis" — not me, but "Martin Amis" — is yearningly staring at the mug-reflector on the ceiling at night (when men cry) and he sees two blackheads — headblacks — protruding from his cheeks like hooded negroes on the prowl and he loftily squeezes them and pounds them and knocks them about and they squirt their tears of pus skywards, and there's a hollow-caustic mess on the mug reflector, he takes a few seconds to see it. And that's what happens when galaxies collide. When galaxies collide, *that's* what happens.

Interviews, interviews and more interviews, they come like blow-jobs in the scuzzy London night, when men cry. They're all after me: the *Sunday Times*, the *Standard*, the *New Dentician*, *The Scotsman*, *Molars Gazette*, *Gums Illustrated*, *Options*, *The London Review of Teeth*, *Maclean's Quarterly*, *Esquire*, *Just Fillings*, *The International Root Canal Observer*, and the *Reader's Digest*, which wants to run extracts.

They all freaked out over the book, and wanted to know more about it, like when I was writing it, did my teeth already ache, or did they begin to hurt afterwards, and whether I use a pen or a pencil for getting at those awkward bits in between, and what my daily routine as a significant novelist is — rinse, brush, rinse, or just brush and rinse, three times a day or just twice, and where exactly do I stand on toothpicks? No book has ever received more attention, not since the Big Bang, when the earth blew up like a pulsing snotrag.

My normal day, huh? First, I grunge the sicky-wicky, then I scowze out the scab-tube, then I skunk down the flunk-pustule, and that just about takes me up to lunch. For lunch, I'll

MARTIN AMIS

have a light shit-snack of cannelloni with tomato sauce like the castrated cocks of two hundred dwarves dowsed in their own blood, then its back to irking the scuzz-wock. Then I'll screw-whack the scrag-head and soil the downside of the whinge-pussy before getting in a bit of shagbagging the apothegm before a dinner of Supa-scrag-fleck-on-toast. After dinner, it's down to the spick-arse to sconse some clap-wax off a pluto-gasket, and then its into my jim-jams and nighty-night with heads-down for beddy-byes.

This is the big one, it's the zoom-race, the mega-smegma-marathon, the outface-olympiad of inky guys who knock each other out every single bloody day with pen-punches to the chin. I'm talking books. Those things. And I'm talking novelists. Big novelists, who's up there with me? In this scrawny little country, no-one touches me, no-one comes near. *Not anyone*. No way, ho-zay. On the spinning roulette-globe of posterity I'm up there with the mega-Americans, and I've got written confirmation, solid as a brick through your window in the night (when men cry), from the real big guys, like Bellow and Updike. Like, on the beigey backside of my latest, *The Information*, there's quotes — *quotes* — from both those guys, and see them *salivate*.

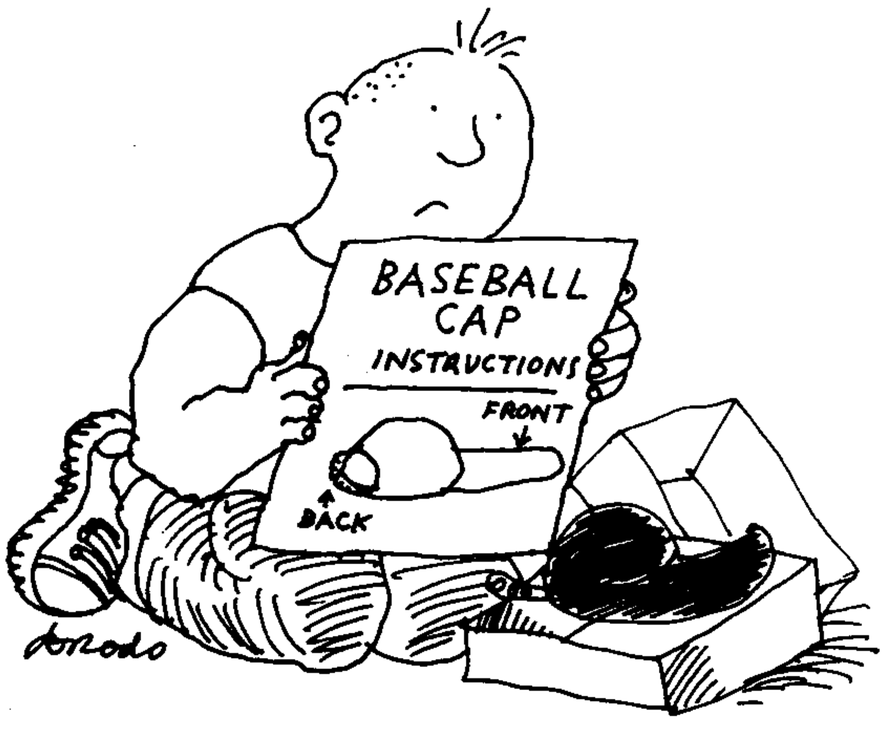
"Martin Amis is attempting to have a go at trying to construct a new sort of book not all that different from a novel" — JOHN UPDIKE.

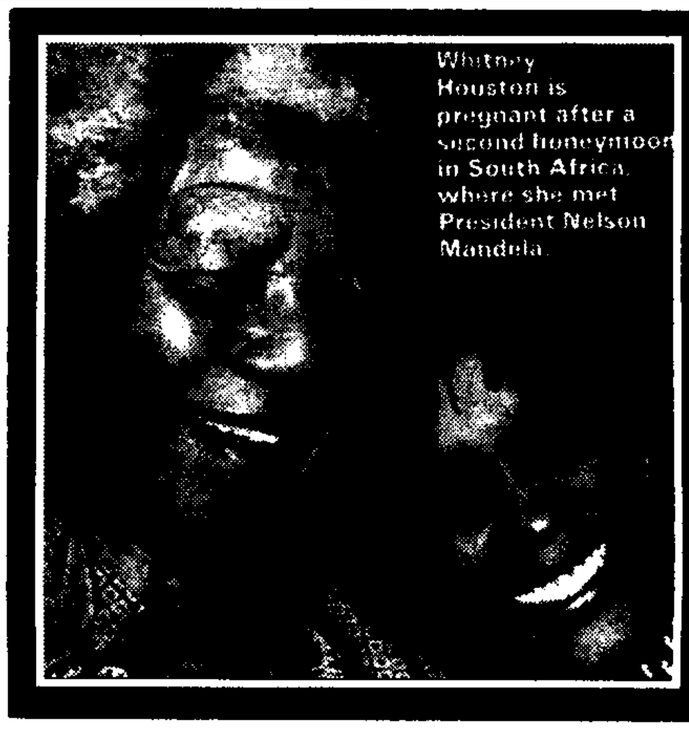
"Martin Amis certainly uses words, our greatest writers have also used words. And with enough of those words placed in the right order, you find you have written a book. Martin Amis has written a book, or books, and that's pretty heady. It places him outside the central tradition of fishmongers, ball-bearing salesmen and fire chiefs, few of whom have achieved such a thing" — SAUL BELLOW.

See?

I am the rat-nosed novelist of urban decay, sniffing out insights into the metropolitan uranus amongst the skunky puddles of the city (where men cry at night) as it fist-fucks its way to the murkily alopeciac millennium. But now I've been paid a sum commensurate with my skills, I am in the position of having the urban decay sent up to me, rather than having to go out and look for it myself.

Yesterday, I started on my new book, on my new book I started. Yesterday. That's what I started on: my new book. I'm paid per sentence, these days. Paid. Per. Sentence. These. Days. Repetitions included. And repetitions are included too. Anywozzle, I want to hunt out some new territory, to take this new novel, this new page-clump, in a really major new direction, a take-breathing new departure for a novelist at the very peek-a-boo of his capabilities. So I hit upon this great new theme, previously untackled by any novelist. Death. Death, and the way we're all getting older, and we're all going to die, and *no-one but me, the novelist "Martin Amis", realises it.* I brain-thought it'd be mega-cool to mix this theme in with another brilliant new theme: urban decay. So I had my bloke nip down to the streets with a check-list I'd supplied, with instructions to bring back: 1) a dog turd, 2) a half-eaten potato chip 3) A noisy pop record 4) a used oozily vivacious elastoplast 5) A black man called something suitably absurd 6) a scoop of something unashamedly glutinous. I'm now waiting for his return with the six, bitch-biro in my hand, so I can splat them down in my incandescent prose as quick as possible before sending him back out onto the rucky streets with them all. Now all I — "Martin Amis" have to do is conjure up a brand new character to go with them — a sort of Keith Talent/Richard Tull, John Self sort of character, but kind of different, maybe — and, together with my unique insights into astronomy, I should be able to create a pretty intoxicating new snot-Bible for the viscid depression of the new millennium. Pretty sophisticated; pretty scrunge-bummy, huh?





"Of course those bastards are guilty," said Tatsuya Komori, a taxi driver in Tokyo.

"They must have brought the poison in from Russia. They have members there, you know. The sooner they lock them up the better."

Daily Telegraph

7. DICK storage crate ——— **£11**
Unfinished rubber tree wood.
36x36 cm. H31 cm.

IKEA Catalogue

National Enquirer

Literary Review

Lez Boss

Vamps & Tramps: New Essays by Camille Paglia
(Viking, £17)

CAMILLE PAGLIA is, it goes without saying, bonkers. Barking. Touched. Nutty as a fruitcake. Bananas. A long way round the bend. Many bricks short of a load. Not all there.

The point hardly needs labouring, does it? Just look at this book's cover: there's Camille, the wrong side of 45, head-high to a tennis net, making like a gunfighter at the OK Corral, hands outstretched, ready to go for her gun. Only she hasn't got one. She's got a wee scout's knife hanging from her belt. It's rather a sad and dorky fantasy for a middle-aged academic to make public, isn't it? Roy Strong in drag would be more frightening.

On the other hand if you look at the people Paglia has managed to annoy, you immediately begin to warm to her. Every dough-headed professional *Guardian* woman in the land has attempted to patronise Paglia, as the message has slowly seeped through their thick layers of self-satisfaction that she despises them.

In the *Sindie*, "Joan Smith" (the pseudonym used by one of the dreariest collectives) evidently felt she had scored an ace by saying Paglia wasn't invited to *her* party. "Paglia repeats her claim to be a feminist. It can hardly come as a surprise if some of us who genuinely like sex, men and ourselves are unwilling to share the designation with her."

The inner sanctum, the *Guardian* Women's Page itself, ran a whole feature in which a series of pedigree chumps tried to pretend that Paglia doesn't matter, hardly exists at all, never heard of her, who? One resentful cabbage called Linda Grant said: "I find it hard to know what her contribution to feminism is" — this obviously being considered to be a terminally crushing remark. She also had the cheek to add: "It's so very difficult to figure out what she stands for."

Maybe Linda Grant couldn't figure out a Ladybird book?

Vamps & Tramps is certainly nothing but opinion. Although Paglia occasionally reviews a book or pretends to answer a question, this is never more than a pretext for more Pagliarism. It's just the Paglia Annual for this year: her own fanzine by and about herself.

Paglia explains that it is a "multimedia book in the Sixties style of Marshall McLuhan". All this means is that it's her own private scrapbook, bulked out to more than 500 pages with a transcript of every television programme and interview she's done, and rounded it off with a collection of Paglia cartoons and a 50-page annotated bibliography of every newspaper mention ("Paglia: Sie ist die umstrittenste Sex-Theoretikirin der Gegenwart, *Playboy*, Germany, June 1993").

Supposedly the book has this format because Paglia's not just a boring old prof, scribbling away: she's a *performer*, a popstar, all modern like, sort of Madonna-ish, don't you know? "My generation's synapses are electronic and our circuitry hyperkinetic," she says (battery not supplied). Actually it's just more proof of her extraordinary ability to take every little thing she herself does dead seriously. So, for example, she thinks it historically significant that in the 60s she wore a jeans jacket: "Hard as it may be to understand now, since the style has become universal, it was a radical gesture for a woman then." Cor!

Paglia mythologizes without shame. Chez Paglia everyfink's either Apollonian or Dionysian (po-faced or sex-mad, to you). She believes that sad baggage Princess Diana "stimulates atavistic religious emotions" and taps into "ancient archetypes", including that of "the pagan goddess" ("Diana, a fierce Italian goddess of the woods, versus Camilla, Virgil's Amazon, the militant Volscian horsewoman"). But then she also says: "I recognise the austere elegance and gravity of ancient Egyptian ritualism in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*."

Enough said? As we were saying, she's obviously barmy. She admits it herself. "I'm an absurd, rather comical person," she says. "My sex life has been a *disaster*". She doesn't want to be lesbian at all, she wants to be a gay man: rather a pointlessly roundabout route for a woman to arrive at the fellers, what what? No wonder she's still en route.

So can we blithely discount everything this "deranged gender-neutral entity" says? Dear me, no. Just because the messenger's foaming at the mouth, it doesn't mean she brings no news. Or as Paglia characteristically puts it, "great art comes *only* from mutilated egos".

As a berserk attacker of cant and a teller of unwelcome truths, Paglia is *sans peur*. She is "an extreme advocate of the most lurid forms of pornography". She thinks "our present age of consent is far too high". She announces that: "The eating disorders that plague bourgeois feminism are the regressive rituals of docile daughters who, on some level, refuse to fend for themselves." She believes that "the shocking toll of AIDS on gay men in the West was partly due to their Seventies delusionalism that a world without women was possible" and that "The Stonewall victory was in many ways Pyrrhic."

"We're born *bad*... We're born animals... Society *civilizes* us," she says. "Our feminist culture at the present moment is *completely* dependent on *capitalism*." "Women are not in control of their bodies; nature is." "The feminist view of male oppression is naive. Woman is dominant." "Greatness is not a white male trick." Faster, faster!

Only somebody as mad as she is would dare to put such opinions forward at all now.

Books & Bookmen

☐ THE departure of Old Etonian charmer Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson from the day-to-day management of the publishing company he founded in his own name, then rendered insolvent, then sold to Reed Books, has not yet been told in full.

In February Sincere-Stevenson was called in by Sandy Grant, the recently installed Australian chief executive of Reed Books. It had come to Grant's notice that Sincere had personally commissioned no fewer than 40 titles in the previous month, and yet the company's balance sheet, spread out on the table before Grant, showed only losses.

The interview culminated in an uncomfortable exchange. "Christopher, what contribution have you made to this company in the past year?" Sincere embarked on an elaborate description of his diplomatic skills before Grant snapped back: "I'll tell you what contribution you've made... fuck all. What do you think is the best thing you could do for the company in the future?" Again, Sincere flannelled. "I'll tell you the best thing you could do for this company... fuck off."

Sincere retreated having been told he had the weekend in which to break the news to his wife. On the Monday morning, he was partially reprieved when John Potter, md of Reed's trade division, told him Grant had gone in a bit too hard. Hence the compromise under which Sincere will work from home, editing the books of a select dozen or so of his authors.

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
HE NEEDS THE MONEY FOR DENTAL WORK
MARTIN AMIS BOOK LAUNCH
AFTER JULIAN BARNES KICKS HIS TEETH IN
MARTIN AMIS BOOK LAUNCH
BOOM BANG-A-BANG

■ THE utterly charming Robyn Sisman (see *Eyes passim*) has set literary tongues wagging with *Special Relationship*, her new novel.

The *Sunday Times* has identified two rather obvious "roman à clef" portaits of author Robert "Bomber" Harris and Martin Amis's sacked agent Pat Kavanagh. But there are apparently more examples of thinly disguised publishing folk than this.

The names of publishers Simon King and Kate Parkin are being touted as the basis for a rather ghastly fictional married couple. Can this odd pairing be right?

'Bookworm'

footnotes

JOBS FOR THE GILL

DOUBLE TIME: Gill Rowlands

WITH a tremendous flourish of trumpets, the government set up the commissioner for the rights of trade union members in 1989.

She was Gill Rowlands JP, an accomplished Tory barrister. Her job was to advise anyone who felt done down by trade unions, and to hand out public money to sue them.

She was given a staff of five, comfortable and expensive offices in Warrington, and an agreeable salary which last year was £32,715 for a fifteen-hour week, plus travel and meal expenses and even free trips abroad. (Last year she went at taxpayers' expense to Poland to give a lecture.)

Mrs Rowlands started with tremendous vigour, spraying the members of the Institute of Personnel Managers and the North West Law Society with mailshots about the extensive services she could provide to all those suffering from trade union tyranny. Very few people responded. Last year, for instance, only 47 people applied for help, less than one a week.

Mrs Rowlands has a huge pile of money to spend on the legal costs of complainants whose cases she assisted. Figures wrung from a reluctant employment secretary (Michael Portillo) by Ian McCartney MP show that in the first year her office spent £17,893 on legal costs — but only two cases came to court, both of them lost.

In the second year she spent £75,803, and no cases came to court at all. In the third year she spent £85,588: five cases came to court. In the fourth year, in a supreme effort, she spent £193,265, but still only five cases came to court. In the fifth year, she slipped back to £93,763 — and only one case came to court. This year, she has already spent a record £108,002 on legal costs for only three cases which came to court. More than half a million pounds of public money has been shelled out in costs for 16 cases. Compare that with 70,000 tribunal cases a year from people who allege that they have been badly treated by employers.

Mrs Rowland's office was a complete flop, so the government decided to spend more money on it and set up another one like it. In 1993 it appointed a commissioner for "protection against unlawful industrial action". The new commissioner was, er, Gill Rowlands. She was paid an extra £16,000 a year for an extra seven and a half hours work a week. In her first year, as was her habit, the new commissioner sent out floods of material about the services she could provide to help the victims of strikes.

The response was electric. In the whole of 1994, one person made a formal application for help from the new commissioner — a parent who complained that the National Union of Teachers had organised industrial action without the statutory immunities. The complaint, which was entirely frivolous, was settled after talks between the parent and the school. No other cases went to court, or involved any legal advice. The office of the new commissioner, like the office of the old one, was a complete waste of time and public money.

Amory Pokery

■ **THANKS to a sleazy blunder in the department of the paymaster-general, Mr David Heathcoat-Amory MP, 152,000 national health service pensioners have been circulated with a glamorous puff for a private health care organisation.**

Top civil servants under Mr Heathcoat-Amory decided to send out "promotional material" from the Liverpool-based health insurance society, Medicash, in exchange for a fee which they will not disclose. They sent the puff out without contacting anyone in the national health service. The NHS's pensions agency (NHSPA), which works out pensions for 395,000 NHS pensioners, is hopping mad. A spokeswoman told the *Eye*: "It is not our policy to circulate advertising material to pensioners. This should not have happened and will not happen again."

Tom George from the paymaster-general's chief executive's office is full of apologies. "The error was ours," he says. "The intention was to discuss this with the NHSPA before the information was issued, but unfortunately this did not take place." Although he reveals that material was sent to 152,000 pensioners, he passes the whole business off as an unfortunate error.

In fact, the *Eye* discovers, the Medicash puff was the first of what was intended to be a flood of advertisements for private health care directed without their consent at NHS pensioners. Mr Ken Arnold, finance director of Medicash, explained: "Our material was circulated only after long negotiations between the paymaster-general's office and the British Health Care Services Association."

The BHCSA represents private health care organisations whose subscriptions are deducted by employers. They have been increasingly worried by the pensioners failure to renew their

PAYMASTER AT LARGE: David Heathcoat-Amory MP

subscriptions when they retire. So they planned to circulate NHS pensioners to remind them to renew their subs. The paymaster-general's office readily agreed to send the reminder out to nearly half its list of confidential addresses. Mr Arnold says: "We were just the first firm to take the opportunity of the agreement of the paymaster to circulate this sort of material. It was intended that material from lots of other organisations would follow."

The plan was foiled by complaints from NHS pensioners. Mr David Eves, a former NHS finance director, could not believe his eyes when the envelope from the paymaster-general dropped through his letter box. "I found it offensive for two reasons," he said. "To start with the stuff was advertising material for a private health organisation. More importantly, the envelope contained on the outside my NHS pension control number, alongside my name. Anyone who saw the envelope could contact the agency and, by quoting the number, change the arrangements for paying my pension. If that isn't an offence under the data protection act, it should be."

Mr Eves contacted his MP, Martin Redmond, who put down a question — and the whole ambitious advertising spree collapsed. Whether Mr Heathcoat-Amory, a former accountant for Price Waterhouse, will be prosecuted under the data protection act remains to be seen.

TEC MATES

■ CONTINUING the never-ending *Eye* series on the contracting policies of training and enterprise councils (TECs), and featuring this issue: THE SUSSEX TEC.

1 The TEC searched around for a local car dealer to supply the necessary six luxury cars for the use of directors. The lucky firm to win the £100,000 contract was Caffyns of Eastbourne. The deal wasn't specially cheap — it cost the TEC (ie the taxpayer) £1,588 more than the lowest bid. But then Alan Caffyn, the firm's chief executive, is on the board of the TEC.

2 The TEC searched around for a local media company to supply visual training aids. The lucky firm to get the £25,000 contract was EPIC Interactive Media in Brighton. The deal wasn't specially cheap — it cost the TEC (ie the taxpayer) £290 more than the lowest bid. But then James Brathwaite, the firm's chief executive, is on the board of the TEC.

PITCHER OF WATER

■ **WHAT a prickly chap is Sir Desmond Pitcher!**

When the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) investigated the Grand Regatta Columbus, which was sponsored by the Merseyside development corporation in 1992, Sir Desmond, the corporation's chairman did not appear. The chief executive Mr Chris Farrow went instead — and got a terrible rollicking from the committee.

Richard Tracey, a former Tory minister, accused him of being "rather fumbling and looking for information — and clearly you ought to have a better command of your brief". Mr Tracey told Mr Farrow: "There have been several suggestions that your chairman (Sir Desmond Pitcher) should have been speaking to the committee."

The committee's verdict on the regatta fiasco was unusually fierce. "We deplore the fact that these events have cost the public sector

PUT OUT THE FLAGS: Chairman Pitcher and Chief Executive Farrow

and local businesses in excess of £1m with little evidence of any beneficial effect on inward investment. These funds would have been available for regeneration on Merseyside were it not for the corporation's mismanagement of the events, which we condemn. We expect the department and the corporation to take note of the criticism..."

Sir Desmond does not seem to have been impressed. A few weeks later, on 14 February, he was giving evidence to another Commons committee — for employment — about his £325,000 salary and bonus as chairman of North West Water. Asked by the committee chairman for details of the company's donations, he stubbornly refused to supply them, even though he agreed he would tell any shareholder who asked him.

Questioned by Angela Eagle MP about the loss of £1 million public money on the Columbus Regatta, he replied: "You and I see that differently. I think it made £6 million of public money by way of taxes raised on the event." Sir Desmond then made a moving defence of his salary and share options as "equitable and reasonable" and less than he got in his previous job as group chief executive of Littlewoods.

Littlewoods is one of the firms who have moved into wonderful new office accommodation at Albert Dock, a showpiece renovation of which the Merseyside Development Corporation is specially proud. The Eye asked the Corporation whether Sir Desmond had declared any interest, and got this rather testy reply from Lynne Franks, a London-based public relations firm:

"1.The decision by the Littlewoods Organisation to see premises in the Albert Dock preceded Sir Desmond Pitcher's appointment to the board of Merseyside development corporation in April 1991.

"2. The corporation disposal was to Arrowcroft/Linenhall and did not involve Littlewoods directly.

"3. Sir Desmond Pitcher formally declared his interest to the board of Merseyside development corporation and was not present at any meetings where this issue was discussed.

"4. Any allegations to the contrary of these facts are totally inaccurate and indeed libellous."

Roll on, Roll off, Roll over

■ **WHEN the roll-on roll-off ferry Estonia went down last September with heavy loss of life, most experts assumed the heady days of undivided car decks, which cause the ferries to sink within minutes of a leak, were numbered. They were reckoning without the determination of the ferry companies and the department of transport.**

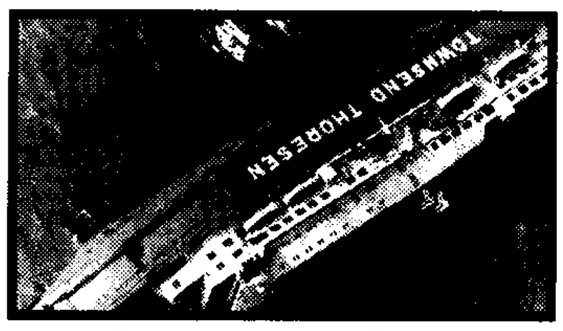
The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has set up a special committee on the Estonia disaster. The committee is operating on what is laughably called "a fast track". It will report in May; the IMO will consider the report some five or six months later; and any action which follows is not expected for a further 18 months.

Brian Mawhinney, the transport secretary, takes refuge behind this interminable delay. Meanwhile every responsible expert in the business insists that ferries with undivided car decks are a permanent threat to the lives of passengers.

The Royal Institution of Naval Architects (RINA), in its submission to the IMO, demands that "the owners must satisfy national authorities that should free flooding of the vehicle deck occur the ferry will survive upright for a time sufficient for escape and rescue".

RINA has now been joined by the Royal Academy of Engineering, which in a recent public statement demands: "There must be an overriding objective to design new ships or to modify existing ro-ro ships such that following major ingress of water to the car deck an essentially upright position is maintained for at least 30 minutes."

These outspoken demands from



normally cautious professional organisations have been greeted by Mawhinney and his department with profound indifference. The Commons select committee on transport doesn't seem too concerned, either. Its hearings on cross-Channel safety have already started. On 3 April it heard evidence from the Chamber of Shipping and the biggest ferry company, P&O, a major contributor to the Tory party; from Stena Sealink and from trade unions — many of which have been smashed by P&O.

Despite angry pleas, the committee has refused to hear oral (and therefore televised) evidence from the Herald Families Association, which represents the families of the 192 people who died on P&O's Herald of Free Enterprise ferry when it capsized outside Zeebrugge harbour almost exactly eight years ago.

The HFA's written submission to the committee ends with a grisly calculation. It estimates the cost of modifying the ferries so that they are stable for at least half an hour after a leak at about £90 million. It also estimates the cost of the Zeebrugge disaster at £90 million. "Zeebrugge was a 'cheap disaster' given the scale of loss of life," it concludes. "Another ferry disaster is inevitable if we allow these flawed vessels to be used without modification — it will not be as cheap as Zeebrugge."

PS: The chairman of the Commons transport select committee is Mr Paul Channon, who became secretary of state for transport soon after the Zeebrugge disaster. His sterling defence of his department earned him the universal contempt of the Herald families and an unflattering nickname: Paul Flannel.

FOWLER & FOULER

■ **IN A Commons debate on the BBC on 9 February, Sir Norman Fowler, former Tory party chairman, declared two interests.**

"I have," he said, "been a member of the National Union of Journalists for 30 years. I am sure that Hon Members on both sides of the House who act as freelance writers are also members of that union. I am also the non-executive chairman of Midland Independent Newspapers."

NUJ representatives at the Birmingham Post, Birmingham Evening Mail and Sunday Mercury — the three main papers owned by Sir Norman's company — are confused. They are not allowed to negotiate pay rates, and were recently refused a place on the health and safety committee. When they wrote to ask whether this refusal amounted to total de-recognition of the union, there was no reply.

JAMMY ATKINS: 2

■ **LEADING contender to scoop the pool in the tendering battle for the Welsh Health Common Services Authority (which runs the health service estates, and carries out several other important health services in Wales) is an old Tory favourite, W.S. Atkins.**

One qualification which is likely to impress Welsh secretary John Redwood is that Atkins was responsible for the biggest public building disaster in Welsh history.

W.S. Atkins was the lead firm in the Hospital Design Consortium, which paid £5.9 million to the government in 1988 after a series of spectacular design faults came to light at the 508-bed Ysybyty hospital at Bangor. (The nursing home in the grounds of the same hospital was also a building disaster which cost the firm which built it, IDC, £150,000 in compensation. The best-known lobbyist for IDC at the time was Denis Thatcher, whose wife was prime minister).

Last year W. S. Atkins won an equivalent contract for the Scottish Common Services Agency. Their success derives from their role as construction supervisor for the defence industries in Saudi Arabia, where Margaret Thatcher and John Major negotiated the biggest arms deals in British history.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

In the City

"BARINGS will look for individuals with creativity, determination, communication skills, an international outlook and, above all, lots of common sense."
— *This year's edition of* The MBA Career Guide

GREED being the keyword at Barings, it is not surprising to learn that many of the bust-out bankers' top earners had an abiding interest in tax — or, to be precise, in paying as little tax as possible.

A highly unusual facet of the Barings corporate structure is that Baring Securities, one of the three divisions of the group, although headquartered in London is actually registered in the tax haven of the Cayman Islands! This may or may not be an historical accident as the company originally was concerned with the bank's Far East activities. But it would be surprising indeed if Cayman status did not confer some worthwhile tax advantages, even if the company was UK resident for some tax purposes.

It certainly ensures that no embarrassing personal details about directors and employee salaries have to be revealed as they do on the banking side. All we can know is that in 1993 the directors — who included James Bax, Barings' main man in Singapore before his underling Nick Leeson became all-important to London bonuses — shared a mere £15.5 million compared with a dividend to parents Barings plc of £10 million.

Tax was equally important, it seems, in Tokyo — where knowledge of Leeson's Osaka exchange futures and options dealings would appear to have been more than minimal, even though here was another dog that didn't bark. The Tokyo operation was always crucial to Barings profits from the days of Japanese warrant master Christopher Heath. In 1993 the Asia-Pacific region, which meant mainly Tokyo and Singapore, contributed £48.5 million of the banking side's total profits of £73 million.

Such profits generated generous bonuses for the masters of the Tokyo universe. But that could mean the expat dealers donating half their take to the Japanese taxman. So Barings collaborated in a system whereby bonuses were deferred until the employees were safely out of Japan. Such deferred bonuses only attracted tax at 20 percent; but to take the waiting out of wanting the bank also arranged for Tokyo staffers to borrow against 75 percent of the deferred bonuses. The loan was to be repaid on exiting Japan and interest was rolled up to be met from interest earned on the cash.

The threatened demise of the bank and the ensuing feared disappearance of the retirement allowance pool must have provoked hysteria among those expats in faraway places. Some had all and most at least 25 percent of their bonuses still tied up in the London based retirement pool. But no doubt ING has assured all concerned that the pension pool has not been emptied, Maxwell style.

The bonus dodge and other neat tax saving tricks such as providing business class air tickets home which could be cashed in are unlikely to have been restricted to Tokyo. No doubt the Inland Revenue may have an interest in examining exactly how Barings has been rewarding those at home and away who made possible £1 million-plus paid to former chairman Peter Baring and his deputy-heir Andrew Tuckey and £500,000-plus to many others.

● The belated discovery by Baring and Tuckey of the need to do the honourable thing and resign bodes ill for those below them in the chain of no command that reached from Bishopsgate to Singapore. With the Bank of England investigation not expected for months, how long before Tuckey's protégés "Blue Peter" Norris and Ron Baker, both already sidelined, are "encouraged" to similar discoveries?

BARINGS saviour ING is itself no stranger to the problem of out-of-control/inept/corrupt executives. The NMB banking side of the Dutch group was an eager lender to some of the more collapsible entrepreneurs of the 80s. One relationship which was particularly close — and very expensive — was with the Arrows trade finance group, whose founder Muhammed Naviede is currently on trial for fraud.

THE Serious Farce Office's lack of enthusiasm for competing with Singapore for the head of Nick Leeson is not surprising given a court room defeat suffered last month by the rival crown prosecution service (CPS). A month-long trial of seven defendants accused of conspiring to defraud a German bank with £25 million in stolen bearer bonds was thrown out by the judge.

Dismissing the case, Judge Albert Clark declared: "We cannot legislate for what people are allowed to do in France or Germany or elsewhere." Control of the criminal activities of a country's inhabitants must be territorial, he explained. So a conspiracy here to commit an offence in another country could not proceed.

The reverse may not be so true: Britons can be held accountable for offences orchestrated from abroad. But there is no track record for such a successful prosecution where fraud is concerned. However, that road will seemingly be travelled in the impending trial of BCCI big spender Abbas Gokal, by coincidence extradited from Frankfurt.

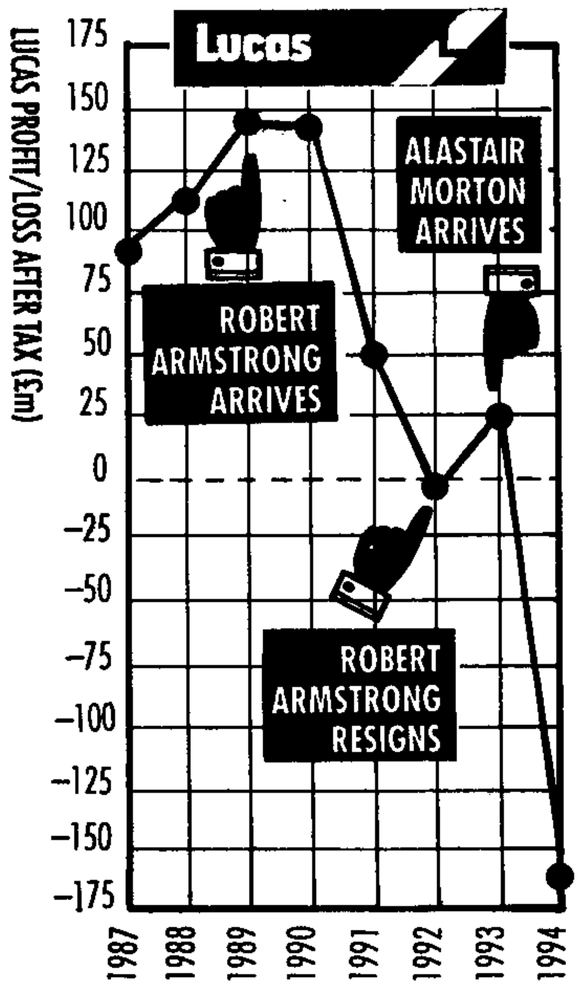
The Gokal trial is unlikely to happen before the German courts rule on Leeson; and in its current fragile state the SFO may not wish to attempt to make new law in such a high profile case. However, it may have little choice if the Germans decide Singapore is too tough for sensitive European defendants and put Leeson on a plane home.

EXACTLY what the attorney-general Sir Nicholas Lyell has achieved with his "solution" to the SFO is hard to see and even harder to justify. After not one but two internal reviews which reached mutually exclusive conclusions, Lyell has opted for little that will redress the reasons the SFO is still a Seriously Flawed Office.

The back-to-basics approach of hoovering up every fraud involving £1 million or more will greatly increase the work load on case officers who have proved incapable of handling the bigger cases.

As the Davie report and Lyell admit, loading up the SFO accountants and lawyers with much more of the same is pointless unless relations with Scotland Yard and the City police are vastly improved. At present the Met will not send cases to the SFO and the City is minded to do the same because of ever more rancorous relationships with the Elm Street bureaucrats over who is best to conduct investigations. Lyell has produced no answer to how that relationship is to change.

British Management Part 15.
LORD ROBERT ARMSTRONG, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service 1979-1987, Director Lucas Industries 1989-92 *and* SIR ALASTAIR MORTON, Chairman Eurotunnel, Director National Power and Director Lucas Industries since 1993.

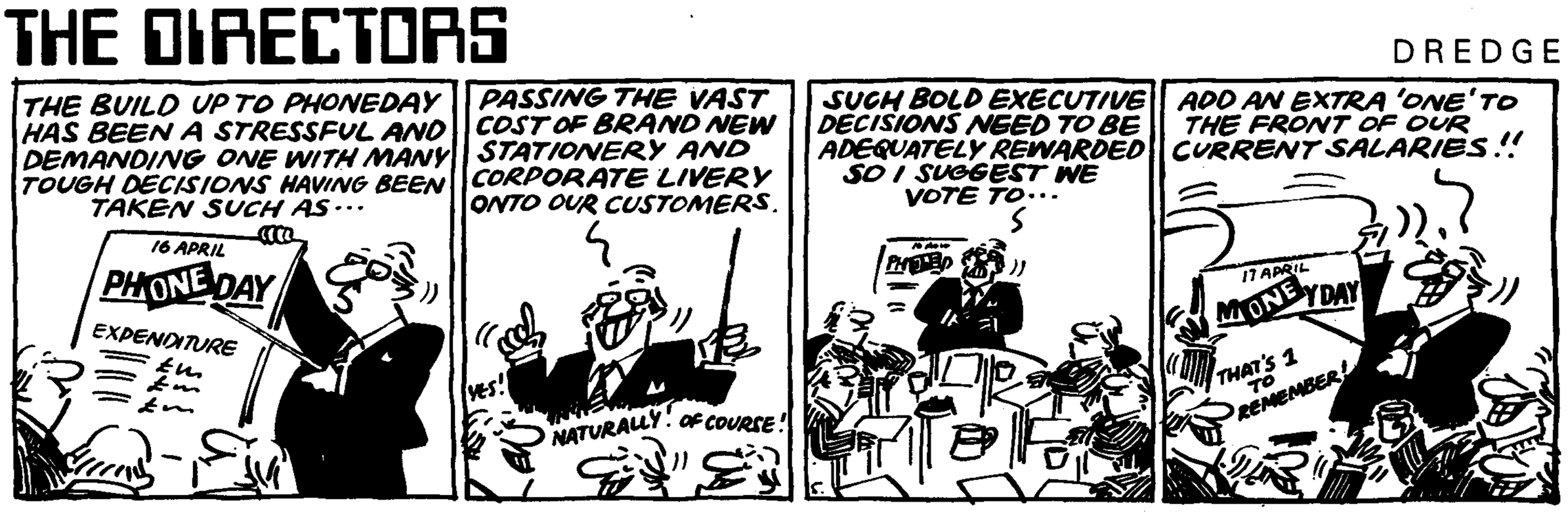


Nor does the "more of the same" policy explain how the legal brains trust that presided over such post-Blue Arrow fiascos as Therm-o-stor, Levitt and Walker will suddenly become better players of the legal game producing smaller, more comprehensible, sounder based and successful indictments.

What the SFO badly needs is an injection of experienced criminal lawyers who can match the high powered legal tricksters, obfuscators and procrastinators who are currently in charge. If the CPS' fraud investigation group is to be left handling only small time cases, there would seem an irresistible case for a transfer of FIG personnel to bolster the SFO. But that requires extra resources at a time when the treasury has cut the SFO's budget!

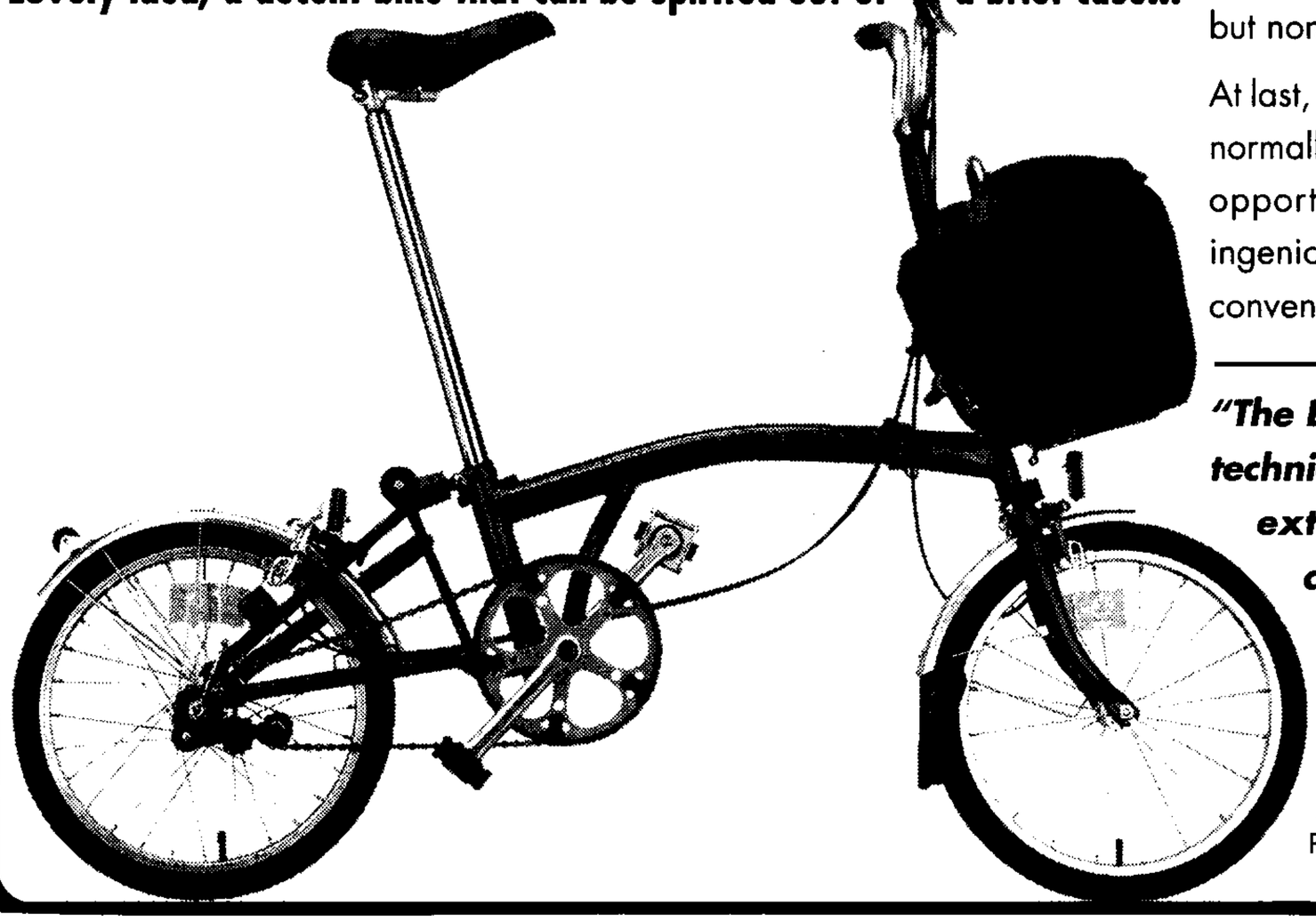
Abolishing the SFO for all its failures and failings was never an option. A merger or reverse takeover by FIG was seen by most experts — and the Graham report — as the best long-term answer. The Lyell-Davie response is only an Elastoplast. It may be that what will emerge is effectively a reshaping of the SFO along the lines recommended by Graham but without any official merger. What is certain is that unless there are substantial changes regarding the role of the police and the quality of the in-house legal team there will be new fiascos raising, once again, the old criticisms.

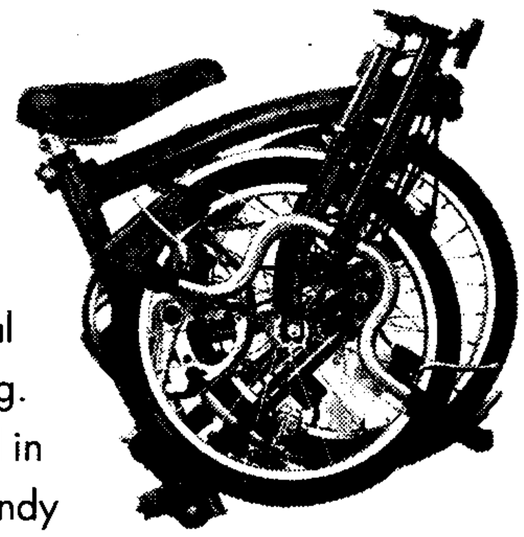
'Slicker'


THE DIRECTORS
DREDGE
THE BUILD UP TO PHONEDAY HAS BEEN A STRESSFUL AND DEMANDING ONE WITH MANY TOUGH DECISIONS HAVING BEEN TAKEN SUCH AS...
16 APRIL
PHONEDAY
EXPENDITURE
£m
£m
£m
PASSING THE VAST COST OF BRAND NEW STATIONERY AND CORPORATE LIVERY ONTO OUR CUSTOMERS.
YES!
NATURALLY! OF COURSE!
SUCH BOLD EXECUTIVE DECISIONS NEED TO BE ADEQUATELY REWARDED SO I SUGGEST WE VOTE TO...
PHONED
ADD AN EXTRA 'ONE' TO THE FRONT OF OUR CURRENT SALARIES!!
17 APRIL
MONEYDAY
THAT'S 1 TO REMEMBER!

BIKE IN A BRIEF CASE?

Lovely idea, a decent bike that can be spirited out of a brief case...





...the snag is it doesn't exist: but a pretty close approximation does - the **Brompton**. It's a proper bike: fast, practical and with lovely handling. Yet it can be transformed in a few seconds into a handy package: not as small as a brief case, it must be owned, but nonetheless amazingly compact and light.

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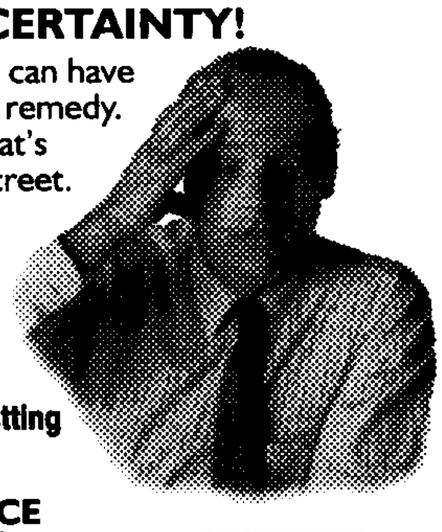

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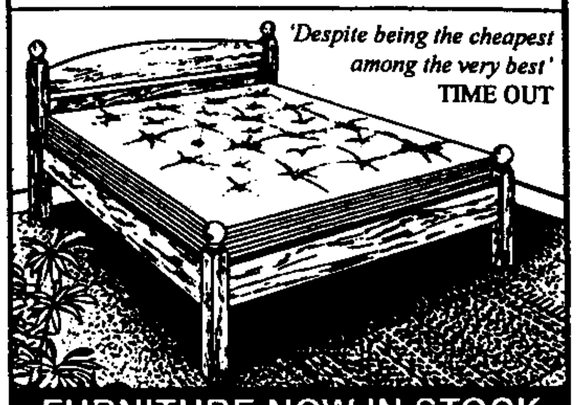

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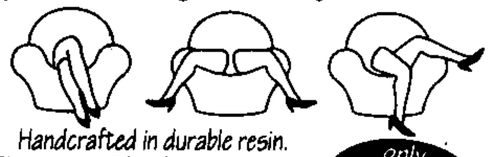

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MALE WRITER 40, seeks lass 30-40 to share procreativity and parenthood. Yorks. Box 2369.

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TALL, GOOD-LOOKING displaced 33 year old, miles from home and living the nomadic life of an ex-pat in Saudi would like to write to a young at heart, incurably romantic and caring woman with a view to meeting for fun, friendship and romance whilst on frequent holidays, leading hopefully to long-term fulfilment. Box 2569.

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HAVE CONVERTIBLE, need woman with minimal baggage to share driving, spending, bedding etc from Miami to Maine, sometime springtime. Headscarf essential, intelligent conversation helpful. Long letter, please. Box 2969.

SOLVENT successful, slim, solicitor 45, married, requires tall or large younger lady for uncomplicated relationship. Box 3069.

DESIRABLE BLONDE 28 seeks tall fashionable man with large sense of humour. No closet Farrah slacks fans please. Yorkshire ONO. Box 3169.

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ATTRACTIVE MALE, 28, company director, 5'10", intelligent and outgoing. Hoping to meet London-based female, 20s, attractive, bright and fun-loving for wining, dining and more. Please send tel. no. and photo. Box 1668.

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EDINBURGH MAN 22, loves books, the Orb, grapefruit, seeks immoral woman with car. Box 3569.

EXPAT or cosmopolitan British gentleman educated, healthy, wealthy, n/s, preferably single — or part time dad sought by attractive, 30ish, Scandinavian woman living abroad. Box 3669.

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WANTED (preferably alive) expense account executive to entice tall shapely blonde to Bath. 35ish, discreet. Box 3869.

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SMOOTH TALL AGREEABLE late 40s Gemini man seeks bodily hairy woman to admire, stroke and pamper. Box 4069.

ATTRACTIVE HUMOROUS professional man 55 seeks sensuous, slim lady for occasional discreet daytime dalliance, lunches, country walks, art galleries etc. Box 4169.

VERY ATTRACTIVE slim woman, thirties, seeks tall officer and gentleman type for discreet dalliance. Photo. Cotswolds. Box 4269.

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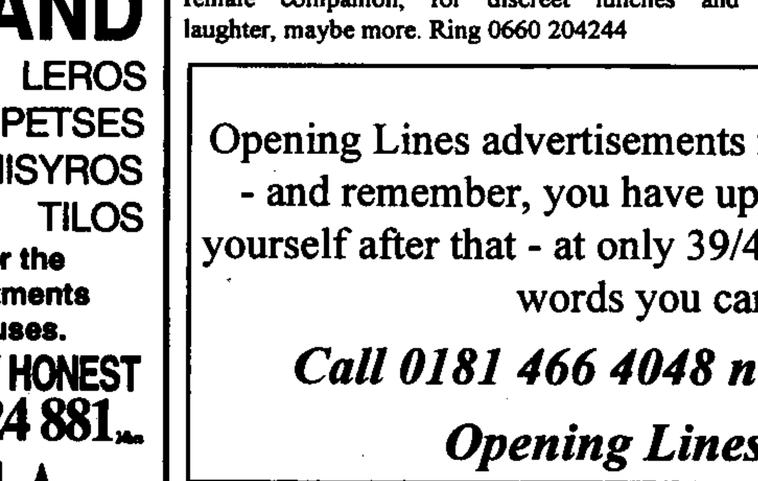

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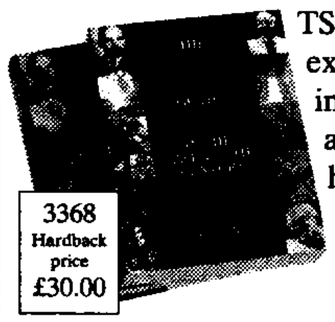

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